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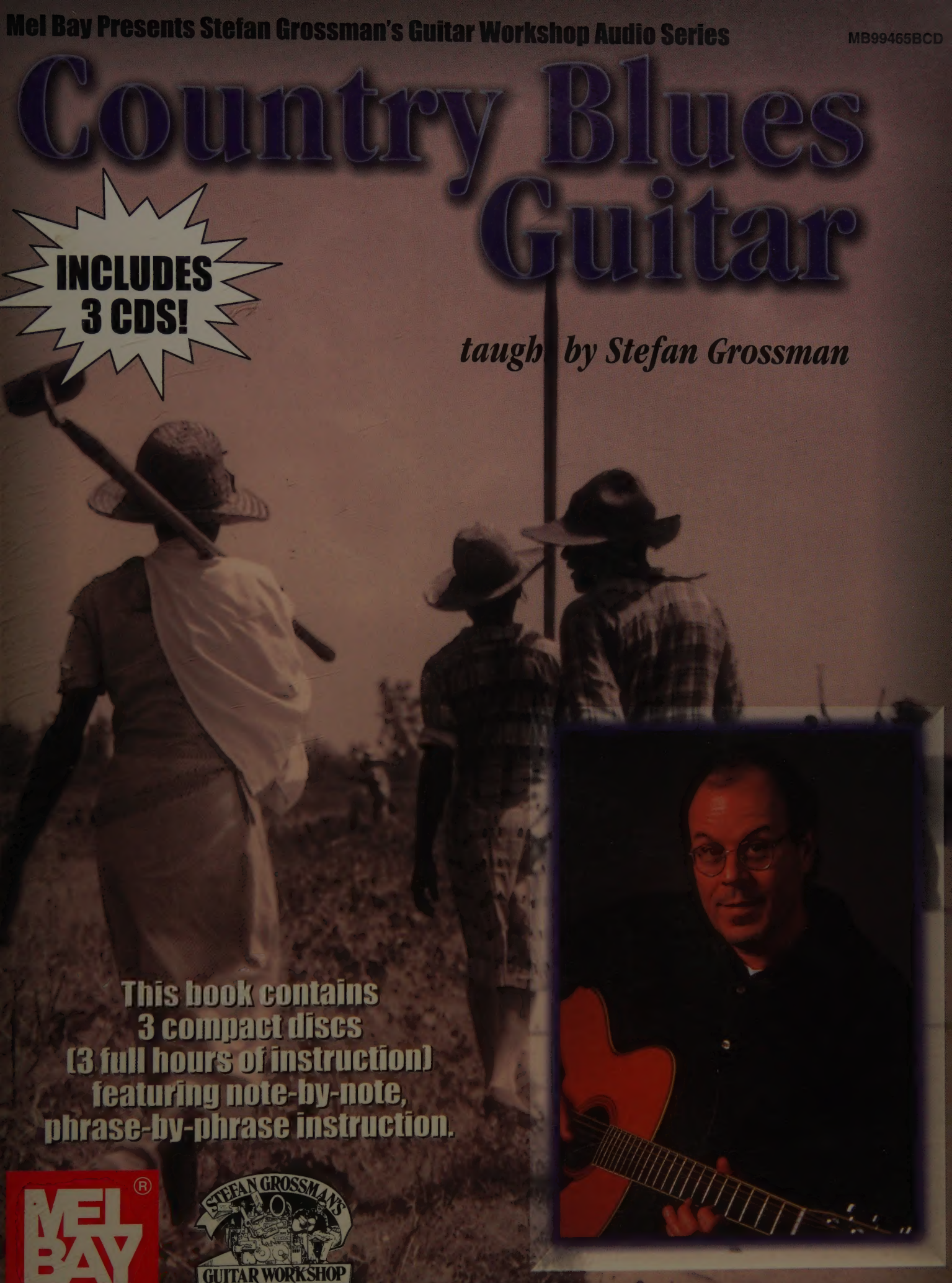

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Mel Bay Presents Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop Audio Series

Country Blues Guitar

taught by Stefan Grossman

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Stefan Grossman - A Retrospective

by Mark Humphrey

photo by Jo Ayres

In a sense, we have his father's aversion to the saxophone to thank for Stefan Grossman's lifelong engagement with the acoustic guitar. It entered his life as his brother Karl, three years Stefan's senior, took up the saxophone. After a few squawk-filled weeks, Herbert Grossman wasn't happy. "He would have him practice in the closet because it was too loud," Stefan recalls. Like all kid brothers, Stefan wanted to imitate Karl, but wasn't keen on practicing in a closet. A quieter instrument – a guitar, for instance – would be less grating on paternal nerves. "My father got a guitar from a Goodwill Shop," Stefan recalls, "an old Gibson F-hole." The year was 1954. Stefan Grossman was nine.

Almost a half century later, Stefan's name has become synonymous with most aspects of the acoustic guitar experience. He's a performer in varied styles who has always been passionately engaged in teaching. In the thirty years since his ***How to Play Blues Guitar*** appeared on vinyl, Stefan has used all available media—books, cassettes, Lps, CDs, videos—in disseminating information to guitarists of all levels. "That's what life is all about," he says, "receiving and giving information." Along with playing and teaching, he has been active in recording and championing a host of gifted guitarists worldwide. And his role as archivist of phenomenal filmed and videotaped guitar performances is evident in his Vestapol historical video series and instructional videos for Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop. Stefan's tireless engagement with a range of guitar-related enterprises and explorations has taken him a long way from the Brooklyn Goodwill shop which supplied his first instrument. And the world of guitar lovers is a far richer place for his father's aversion to saxophones.

Stefan was born April 16, 1945 to Herbert and Ruth Grossman. (He and a sax-playing cousin, Steve Grossman, who once worked with Miles Davis and Elvin Jones, were both named for the same grandmother, Stefanie.) He was born in Brooklyn but raised in Queens, New York in an environment he describes as "lower-middle-class" in a family which valued education and the arts. For a brief time, he tried to accompany Karl playing what he calls "1940s oldies but goodies." But he soon chafed at the songs of his parents' era and the formality of reading pop chestnuts from staff notation. "I was learning proper music notation from books," he recalls, "which is rather dry. To a kid of 10 or 11, learning how to play *Autumn Leaves* doesn't mean anything."

Playing three-walled handball, however, was another matter entirely. For nearly four years, Stefan neglected the guitar while attending the all-male Brooklyn Technical High School. Then, as he turned 15, the guitar once more raised its voice. "I started to play guitar again," Stefan recalls, "first because it was the thing for a social event – you'd go to a party and play a guitar and meet girls – and, second, because I really liked the guitar." It was during this time Stefan happened onto the Washington Square Park `hoots' which were in full cry in 1960. They provided Stefan his initial connection with the burgeoning folk revival. At the same time, his curiosity about the music's sources was piqued. "I'd got some old-time country records as well as recordings by Woody Guthrie and Big Bill Broonzy on the suggestion of my brother," he recalls. "My parents thought the old-time music was very strange. They said it had been heavily sponsored in the 1920s and 1930s by Henry Ford, meaning that it was very right-wing music, and my parents were very leftist. The Woody Guthrie and Big Bill Broonzy music was politically alright for them. The politics meant nothing whatever to me but the music really moved me." Stefan's preference was for Broonzy's recordings. "I liked the sound of instruments," he says. "I was struck by Broonzy's rhythmic, driving, phenomenal guitar. It was always the black musicians that interested me most." And the one who had the most profound impact on him was about to enter his life.

"I started going out with some girls from Brooklyn College," Stefan recalls, "and one of their friends, Bob Fox, said, `You should go see the Rev. Gary Davis,' and I didn't even know who Rev. Gary Davis was – I had no idea. That same week I

went to the Folklore Center on Bleecker Street and Jack Prelutsky was there playing a tune, *I Belong to the Band*. I said, 'What's that?' He said, 'That's a Gary Davis piece.' I said, 'Oh,' and things clicked. Someone had just told me to see Gary Davis and there was this piece I liked."

Stefan got Davis's address on Park Avenue in the Bronx and casually informed his parents he was going there for lessons. "My father was really scared because of this little white kid, this white Jewish kid afoot in the worst crime area in the whole of America," Stefan recalls. "My Dad drove me there for that first lesson on the pretense that he wanted to buy shoes at a shop nearby! Once you got to the address you had to go down an alleyway to a little tenement shack at the back which was Rev. Davis's home. You could see rats dancing in the shadows. I knocked on the door and this man opened up and said, 'You bring your money, honey?' One eye was totally missing and the other was bulbous with a cataract. He didn't have his glasses on, he just had his long johns on!"

Despite this off-putting introduction, Stefan remembers feeling "totally charmed" by Rev. Davis. "I mean, he was an incredible genius as a teacher," he says. "He was great if you were a good student. Musically, we really hit it. Emotionally, I'd never had met my grandfathers as they died before I was born and Rev. Davis very much substituted for them. I went out there every Saturday, also every Friday, Sunday, and every school holiday that I could. I'd stay up there for 12 hours at a time. Rev. Davis was a patient, exacting teacher. He would go over everything and help you with the accenting, the notes and variations. Man, he was always practicing! He always said he wanted to keep one or two steps ahead of his students, and he always did."

While learning all he could of Davis's vast repertoire of secular and sacred tunes, Stefan continued to hang out where he had first heard a Davis tune, the Folklore Center, warmly remembered as "a place where you could always get together and pick. You'd go down there and see Dave Van Ronk, Bob Dylan and Doc Watson just sitting and casually playing music. It was a great atmosphere to get started in music." Then, too, there was Washington Square, where, Stefan recalls, "Everything was happening on Saturdays. After the park closed, you'd go to one of the kid's houses in Brooklyn to pick. You'd meet people, some of them bluegrass people, some blues and ragtime people ...we got to be friends and would play." With his friends Steve Katz and Eric Kaz, Stefan played blues as the short-lived Gramercy Park Sheiks. He continued his tutelage from Rev. Davis, who, by 1962 had upgraded his digs with a color TV (won in a church raffle) and a 'No Smoking' sign visible through the omnipresent White Owl cigar haze. Stefan was also absorbing more vintage roots music via 78 collectors. "They were very hip to turn you on to music," says Stefan. "It would take six months, but they would gently lead you from the Memphis Jug Band to Charley Patton." The infectiously funky jug band sound was naturally appealing to the Washington Square 'hoot' crowd. 1963 was the year in which the Rooftop Singers scored a number one hit with an update of Cannon's Jug Stompers 1929 waxing, *Walk Right In*. Stefan's stab at jug band stardom came as an organizer of the Even Dozen Jug Band, a loose ensemble which at times had as many as fourteen members, among them John Sebastian ("an incredible harmonica player," says Stefan), Steve Katz, Peter Siegel, David Grisman, Joshua Rifkin, and Maria Muldaur. A

photo by Jo Ayres

scaled-down incarnation of the group made one album (***Even Dozen Jug Band***, *Elektra EKS 724, 1964*), but wrangling over its direction, coupled with college schedules, made it a short-lived burst of youthful energy.

During this time Stefan was attending Cooper Union Architectural School, though his aims weren't entirely academic. "I was going to school basically to meet girls," he recalls, "and also to stay out of the draft, like thousands of other people." While achieving those goals, Stefan witnessed the astonishing appearance of blues rediscoveries – Mississippi John Hurt, Son House, Skip James, Bukka White – men known from rare 78s seemingly rescued from a time warp. He learned from them all and kept company with like-minded contemporaries, both in New York and Washington, D.C., where he acquired his 'Kid Future' nickname (from being able to play Willie Brown's arrangement of *Future Blues*). Later in California, he encountered John Fahey, Ry Cooder and Steve Mann. "If you could play guitar," says Stefan, "you were accepted anywhere. I found that out. The first time I went to California and met all the good pickers there, I started playing the classic rags and fiddle tunes with counterpoint. As soon as they heard those arrangements I would have a place to sleep that night."

In 1965, Stefan and former girlfriend Rory Block (aka Sunshine Kate) delivered ***How to Play Blues Guitar*** to Elektra. Along with the music, Stefan supplied tablature and notes about blues musicians for the booklet. This pioneering instructional recording led to an acoustic band venture on the West Coast with Janis Joplin, Taj Mahal, and Steve Mann which, due to contractual conflicts, never got beyond the rehearsal stage. Back in New York, Stefan spent a miserable four months (September-December 1966) playing electric guitar with the legendary shock-rock band, the Fugs. (Stefan got the gig when he asked head Fug Ed Sanders if he needed a guitar player. Ed asked, "Are you crazy?" and he replied in the affirmative and got the gig). Early in 1967, Stefan found more convivial company playing in the rock group Chicago Loop. Mike Bloomfield and Barry Goldberg were good friends of the group and after four months, they told him: "You're a fantastic and unique acoustic guitar player and you should stick to that." Jobless, Stefan said to himself: "I've been kicked out of school; I'm out of the draft. (With some difficulty, he got a 4F deferment). I'm going to Europe." Before leaving, Stefan finished four books for Oak Publications, ***Country Blues Guitar, Delta Blues Guitar, Ragtime Blues Guitar*** and ***Contemporary Ragtime Guitar***. With detailed tablature, lyrics, and commentary on the musicians, these books were landmarks in their

Mike Bloomfield & Stefan Grossman photo by Roberto Serra

field. "Grossman's books were unique," wrote Dale Miller nearly three decades later. "The concepts and scope of his vision were much more ambitious than other one-shot method books, and his tablature, though idiosyncratic, was extremely accurate. In addition, he explained how to capture the tone of the original work, advising that to play a Gary Davis tune one should wear a thumbpick and fingerpicks on two fingers just like Davis, to play a Mississippi John Hurt tune one should use the bare thumb and two bare fingers just like Hurt ...and so on."

In June 1967, Stefan arrived in England with a list of contacts provided by his friend, Marc Silber (owner of the New York City shop Fretted Instruments). "Just after I got to London I went up to the Cambridge Folk Festival and I faced a big dilemma whether to enter a folk contest as an amateur or not," Stefan recalls. "I was an amateur but they said I was too good an amateur. I met the High Level Ranters at the festival and I went up to Northumberland and I hung out there. One of the big shocks of coming to England is that everyone sings a lot, and it doesn't make any difference, good voice or bad voice. So I did start to sing, and I went through a phase of writing songs because everyone else was going through it, and then suddenly I found myself in what I do best, which is to play the guitar with the occasional song. I play the guitar much better than I can sing - to say the least!"

Stefan found a 'parallel universe' of sorts to the American folk revival thriving in England. "The Young Tradition were friends of Marc Silber," Stefan recalls, "and they were living in the same house as John Renbourn and Bert Jansch. They were really open-armed. I arrived when there seem to be a musical vacuum and people were thirsty for something new ...I just had this capacity to be able to play country blues and intricate ragtime tunes. The guitar styles of Mance Lipscomb, Skip James, Fred McDowell, Rev. Davis, Son House, Mississippi John Hurt – you name it, I could play their styles to a T because I'd study these intensively – like a college professor – and could play the music without pretending to be a White blues singer. I was a guitarist presenting a ragtime and blues repertoire. The English audiences liked, accepted and even seemed to appreciate this approach."

Folk Roots editor Ian Anderson remembers Stefan's arrival on the British folk scene as akin to that of the Yanks storming a beachhead: "He didn't, to be blunt, set out in entirely the best fashion," Anderson writes, "trumpeting his arrival here with a *Melody Maker* interview which, basically, said that whilst these British guitar chappies of the Jansch/Renbourn ilk were jolly talented, they couldn't play 'real' blues. Thus he had come here to show us a trick or two." Show 'em Stefan did, and his performances on the British folk club circuit led to a recording contract with Fontana, then one of Britain's leading folk labels. His debut album, ***Aunt Molly Murray's Farm***, rated a 'record of the month' kudo from *Melody Maker* in 1969, and his follow-up, ***Gramercy Park Sheik***, appeared later the same year. The success of these recordings cemented Stefan's expatriate status and made him a unique fixture of the British and European folk scene. Robin Denselow, writing in *The Electric Muse: The Story of Folk into Rock*, writes that Stefan "carried out the ideals and promise of the folk blues revival with greater success than anyone else... What Stefan achieved with the blues is a musical ideal that other folk musicians, working in different fields, might have followed if they'd had the skill or the imagination... He's written everything from children's songs to bleak, surreal ballads, and a whole variety of instrumentals. He moves from the traditional to the experimental, and back again, in a way that British traditionalists, with only one or two exceptions, find quite unthinkable." While absorbing traces of a British musical accent via contact with Jansch, Renbourn, and Eric Clapton (whom he credits with teaching him the "slow-hand" vibrato technique and with whom he toured with while in the Chicago Loop), Stefan found himself sought after by Paul Simon. "I didn't even know who Paul Simon was," he recalls, "though of course I'd heard Simon and Garfunkel – this was 1969, and they were at their peak. Anyway, Paul was about to leave Art and was thinking about forming a band. He got in touch with me in October, and in December I met him in New York – he was staying in a house which belonged to Segovia's former mistress. Paul gave up on the band idea, but over the next year we recorded four times together. *Paranoia Blues* appears on his first solo album with me playing slide guitar."

Ever restless, Stefan moved to Rome in 1969, continuing to tour not only Great Britain but the rest of Europe as well. Stefan's impact on European guitarists in the late 1960s was prodigious: "To this day the woods of Europe are full of Stefan's heirs," says Dave Van Ronk. But Stefan's love for instruction and the 'cause' of exceptional acoustic guitarists was about to lead him to forums beyond concert halls and folk clubs.

In the early 1970s, responding to many requests, Stefan's parents began marketing a series of their son's audio instruction tapes in the U.S. This was the onset of Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop. At the same time, Stefan was seeking American distribution of his Transatlantic label albums. "Transatlantic was never able to get a deal for me in America," Stefan recalls. "I was really frustrated because I'm an American and I knew my records could sell here." Stefan contacted his collector friend Nick Perls, who reissued the Yazoo blues series, but Perls wasn't interested. His friend John Fahey at Takoma didn't even reply to Stefan's query. Finally, ED Denson, Fahey's Takoma label cofounder, expressed an interest in Stefan's work and they jointly founded the Kicking Mule label, Denson manning the American operation and Stefan holding forth in Europe. "All during those years my instructional books had kept going," Stefan recalls. "My parents had run that operation and had amassed a large mailing list and that was the first

3000 names that we used for Kicking Mule. So there was a lot of mailorder and we started to sell in stores and we started to have some success."

Though Kicking Mule's initial *raison d'etre* was American distribution of an ambitious expatriate's recordings, it quickly became a haven for a wide range of talented guitarists who might otherwise have gone unrecorded. (Not all Kicking Mule acts were guitarists – Stefan vows the label's finest album and the first released was by banjoist Art Rosenbaum.) For Stefan, his isolation in Italy was a further catalyst for producing records of other guitarists: "I would go to the record store in Rome and there was no record there that I could learn from," he says. For a man to whom "getting information is what life's all about," this was untenable. If the records weren't there, Stefan would set about producing them.

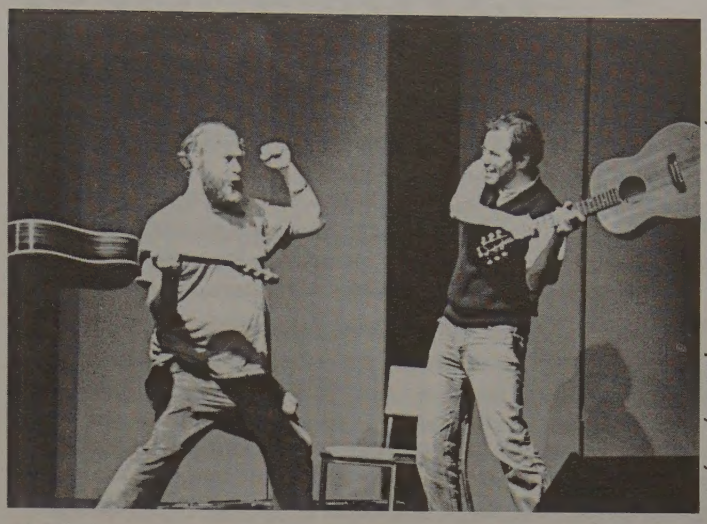
Thus began a decade of recordings with a dual musid±l-instructional focus. While anyone could enjoy the music, the Kicking Mule Lp packages included booklets with tablature from which aspiring guitarists could glean knowledge and attempt to replicate the recording. The Kicking Mule stable of artists included several exponents of guitar adaptations of 'classic' piano rags (Dave Laibman, Ton Van Bergeyk), Celtic revivalists (Dave Evans), leading lights of British folk guitar (John Renbourn, Bert Jansch, Davey Graham), and artists who adroitly wandered the stylistic map (Duck Baker, Peter Finger and Leo Wijnkamp Jr.). The guitarists were an international cast – English, American, Dutch, German, Welsh – who evinced individuality while sharing a common love of the acoustic guitar, usually steel strung and played solo. "Stefan was the focal point for bringing together a whole lot of musicians – guitar players primarily – and giving them a chance to interact with each other," says Duck Baker.

Extensive interaction took place on the Kicking Mule tours Stefan organized for his label's acts. It was an exciting time, says Stefan, of "cross-fertilization. We all learned from each other..." European wunderkinds like Leo Wijnkamp Jr. and veterans like Dave Van Ronk could be seen and heard together picking guitar rags in a way which bespoke a continuity of tradition.

Like almost every renaissance, that of the fingerstyle guitar celebrated by Kicking Mule was short-lived. By 1983, Stefan and Denson were undergoing a "friendly divorce" effectively dissolving Kicking Mule as a haven for acoustic guitarists. "We're very good friends still," says Stefan, "but ED got involved in doing other types of music, not guitar music, which did not interest me at all...." In the late 1970s, Stefan toured and recorded extensively with John Renbourn, with whom he had first recorded in 1976 for Kicking Mule. *New York Times* reviewer Stephen Holden praised their "exceptional rapport ... matched by their understated virtuosity." Of his duets with Renbourn, Stefan said simply, "It works well because we're great friends, and we really work hard on our music."

By the mid-1980s, Stefan had been working on the road for nearly two decades and was weary. Sidelined by a herniated disc, Stefan, based again in Rome, Italy, took stock of his life and decided it was time to come home, especially as Shanachie Records had made him an offer he couldn't refuse. He had been back frequently to perform, but he returned to live in the States in 1987, 20 years since departing at age 22.

His work at Shanachie Records involved CD reissues of the Yazoo catalogue, Shanachie's acclaimed Guitar Artistry series,



John Fahey & Stefan Grossman photo by Jo Ayres

which incorporated some Kicking Mule material, and the vintage performance videos which were precursors of Stefan's current Vestapol video line. "When I hear him describe the lengths he has to go to get this stuff," Duck Baker once remarked of Stefan's film footage sleuthing, "I realize that if anybody else but Stefan was doing it, it just wouldn't happen."

After five years at Shanachie, Stefan left to devote himself full-time to the varied enterprises presently occurring under the umbrella of Stefan Grossman's Guitar Workshop. These include production of learning materials in all media – print, audio, and video. Aside from instructional books, cassettes and videos by Stefan and a host of other fine guitarists, there are the acclaimed Vestapol videos of vintage and contemporary blues, jazz, folk, and country guitar performances. All this activity leaves Stefan precious little time for performances, though he professes not to miss them. He still does the occasional gig and recording, but Stefan, the product of what he calls "a typical Jewish family, believing that the mind is very sacred and very holy," believes what he's doing through his Workshop is of far greater importance. Besides, he had two decades of performing under his belt before the latest phase of his career began. Now Stefan's doing for other guitarists what Rev. Gary Davis did for him, only one needn't brave a Bronx tenement for his instruction. Nothing more formidable than a compact disc player or VCR is required.

Thirty-five years have passed since ***How to Play Blues Guitar*** pointed the way towards a lifetime of passionate involvement with the preservation and perpetuation of guitar music, to paraphrase Malcom X, "by any means necessary." Those who know Stefan unanimously vouch for his tenacity and intensity, qualities which have served him well in his single-minded pursuit of sounds as exciting as those emitted by Big Bill Broonzy's "rhythmic, driving, phenomenal guitar," a sound he first encountered when Eisenhower was President and Stefan's English counterparts were banging away in skiffle bands. The world has much changed since then, but one suspects Stefan's drive to get at the sounds he wants and share them with the like-minded has not. It's a rare knack, but then some guys will go to extraordinary lengths to avoid being locked in a closet with a saxophone.

Explanation of the Tab System

"...Learning from listening is unquestionably the best way, the only way that suits this kind of music. You are setting the notes down for a record of what happened, a record that can be studied, preserved and so on, a necessary and useful companion to the recordings of the actual sounds. I keep thinking of this as I transcribe; if you could do it, it would be good to have a legend across each page reading : 'Listen to the record if you want to learn the song.'"

Hally Wood (taken from the Publisher's Foreword to the *New Lost City Ramblers Songbook*.)

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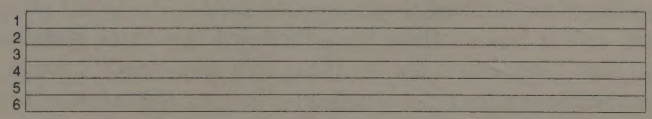
These words are most suitable for introducing the tablature system, for tablature is just a guide and should be used in conjunction with the recordings. Tablature is not like music notation, however the combination of tab and music in an arrangement forms a complete language. Used together with the original recordings they give a total picture of the music.

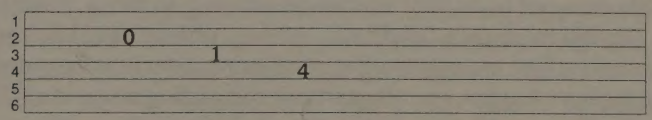
The tab system does not attempt to show rhythms or accents. These can be found on the music or heard in the recordings. Music notation tackles these articulations to a degree, but the overall sensations, the feel and the soul of music cannot be wholly captured on the written page. In the words of the great Sufi Hazrat Inayat Khan: "...The traditional ancient songs of India composed by great Masters have been handed down from father to son. The way music is taught is different from the Western way. It is not always written, but is taught by imitation. The teacher sings and the pupil imitates and the intricacies and subtleties are learned by imitation."

This is the theme I've tried to interpolate into the tablature. Tablature is the roadmap and you are the driver. Now to the tab:

Each space indicates a string. The top space represents the first string, second space the second string, etc. A zero means an open string, a number in the space indicates the fretted position, for instance a 1 in a space indicates the first fret of that string.



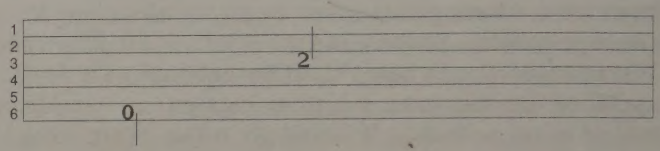
In the diagram below the zero is on the second string and indicates the open second string is played. The 1 is placed on the third string and signifies the first fret of the third string. Likewise, the 4 is in the fourth space and indicates the fourth fret of the fourth string.



Generally for fingerpicking styles you will be playing the thumb, index and middle fingers of your picking hand. To indicate the picking finger in tab the stems go up and line up down from the numbers.

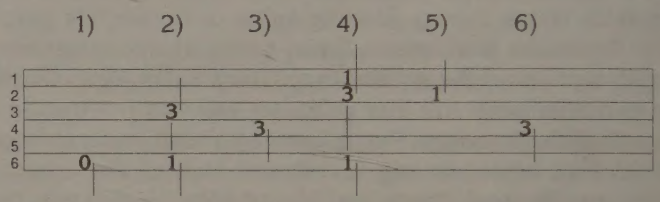
A. A stem down means that your thumb strikes the note.
B. If a stem is up, your index or middle finger strikes the note. The choice of finger is left up to you, as your fingers will dictate what is most comfortable, especially when playing a song up to tempo!

C. The diagram below shows an open sixth string played with the thumb followed by the second fret of the third string played with the index or middle finger:



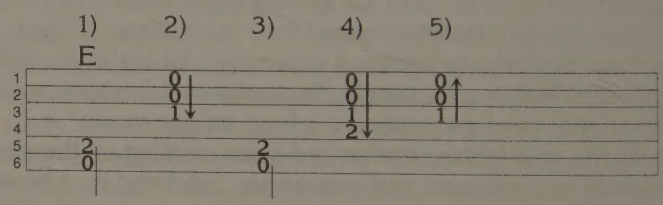
In most cases the thumb will play an alternating bass pattern, usually on the bass strings. The index and middle fingers play melodic notes on the first, second and third strings. Please remember, this is not a rule; there are many exceptions.

In fingerpicking there are two "picking" styles: Regular picking and "pinching" two notes together. A pinch is shown in the tab by a line connecting two notes. A variation of this can also be two treble notes pinched with a bass note. Follow the examples below from left to right:



1) The open sixth string is played with the thumb.
2) The first fret of the sixth string is pinched together with the third fret on the third string. The sixth string is played with the thumb, the third string with the index finger.
3) The thumb strikes the third fret of the fourth string.
4) The first fret/sixth string is played with the thumb; it's pinched with two notes in the treble. The index and middle fingers strike the first fret/first string and the third fret/second string.
5) The next note is the index finger hitting the first fret/second string.
6) Lastly, the bass note is played with the thumb on the third fret/fourth string.

There are certain places in blues and contemporary guitar that call for the use of either strumming techniques or accented bass notes. The tab illustrates these as follows:



1) The thumb hits the open sixth string and the second fret on the fifth string should also sound. For example, play an E chord. Now strike the open string and vary the force of your attack. Try hitting it hard enough so that the fifth string vibrates as well. This technique is very important for developing a full sound and the right alternating bass sound.

2) Next the arrow notation indicates a brush and the arrowhead indicates the direction of the brush.

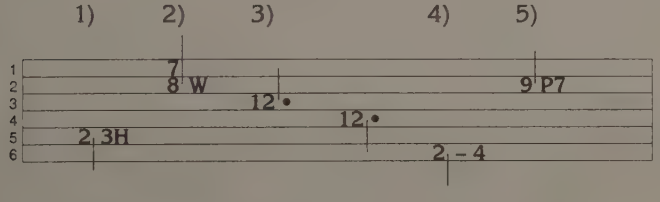
   A. If the arrowhead is pointed down, the hand brushes up towards the sixth string.
   B. If pointed up, the hand brushes down towards the first string.
   C. The number of strings to be played by the brush is shown by the length of the arrows. For example, this arrow shows a brush up toward the sixth string, but indicates to strike only the first, second and third strings.
   D. The brush can be done with your whole hand, index finger or middle and ring finger. Let comfort plus a full and "right" sound guide your choice.

3) The third set of notes again shows the sixth string/open bass note played with the thumb and being struck hard enough to make the fifth string/second fretted position sound.

4) Once more an arrow pointed downward indicates a brush up. This example forms an E chord and the brush up includes the first, second, third and fourth strings.

5) The last set of notes has an arrow pointed upward, indicating a brush downward striking the first, second, and third strings.

Here are several special effects that are also symbolized in tablature:



1) HAMMER-ON: Designated by an "H" which is placed after the stem on the fret to be hammered. In the example above, fret the second fret/fifth string and pick it with your thumb. Then "hammer-on" (hit hard) the third fret/fifth string, i.e. fret the third fret/fifth string. This is an all-in-one, continuous motion which will produce two notes rapidly with one picking finger strike.

2) WHAM: Designated by a "W." In the example the eighth fret/second string is "whammed" and played with the seventh fret/first string. Both notes are played together with your index and middle fingers respectively. The whammed note is "stretched." We do this by literally bending the note up. We can "wham" the note up a half tone, full tone, etc.

3) HARMONICS: Symbolized by a dot (•). To play a harmonic: gently lay your finger directly above the indicated fret (don't press down!) The two notes in the example are both harmonics. The first on the twelfth fret/third string is played with the index/middle finger, while the second note—twelfth fret/fourth string—is played with the thumb.
4) SLIDE: Shown with a dash (–). Play the second fret/sixth string and then slide up to the fourth fret of the sixth string. This is a continuous movement: the string is struck once with your thumb.

5) PULL-OFF: "P" designates a "pull-off." Fret both the seventh and ninth frets on the second string. Play the ninth fret with your index/middle finger and then quickly remove it in the same stroke, leaving the seventh fret/second string. Pull-offs are generally in a downward direction.

6) In certain cases other specific symbols are added to the tab, for instance:
   A. For ARTIFICIAL HARMONICS an "X" is placed after the fretted position.
   B. For SNAPPING a note an indication may be given with a symbol or the written word.

Many times these special techniques are combined, for instance putting a pull-off and a hammer-on together. Coordination of your fretting and picking hands will be complex initially, but the end results are exciting and fun to play.

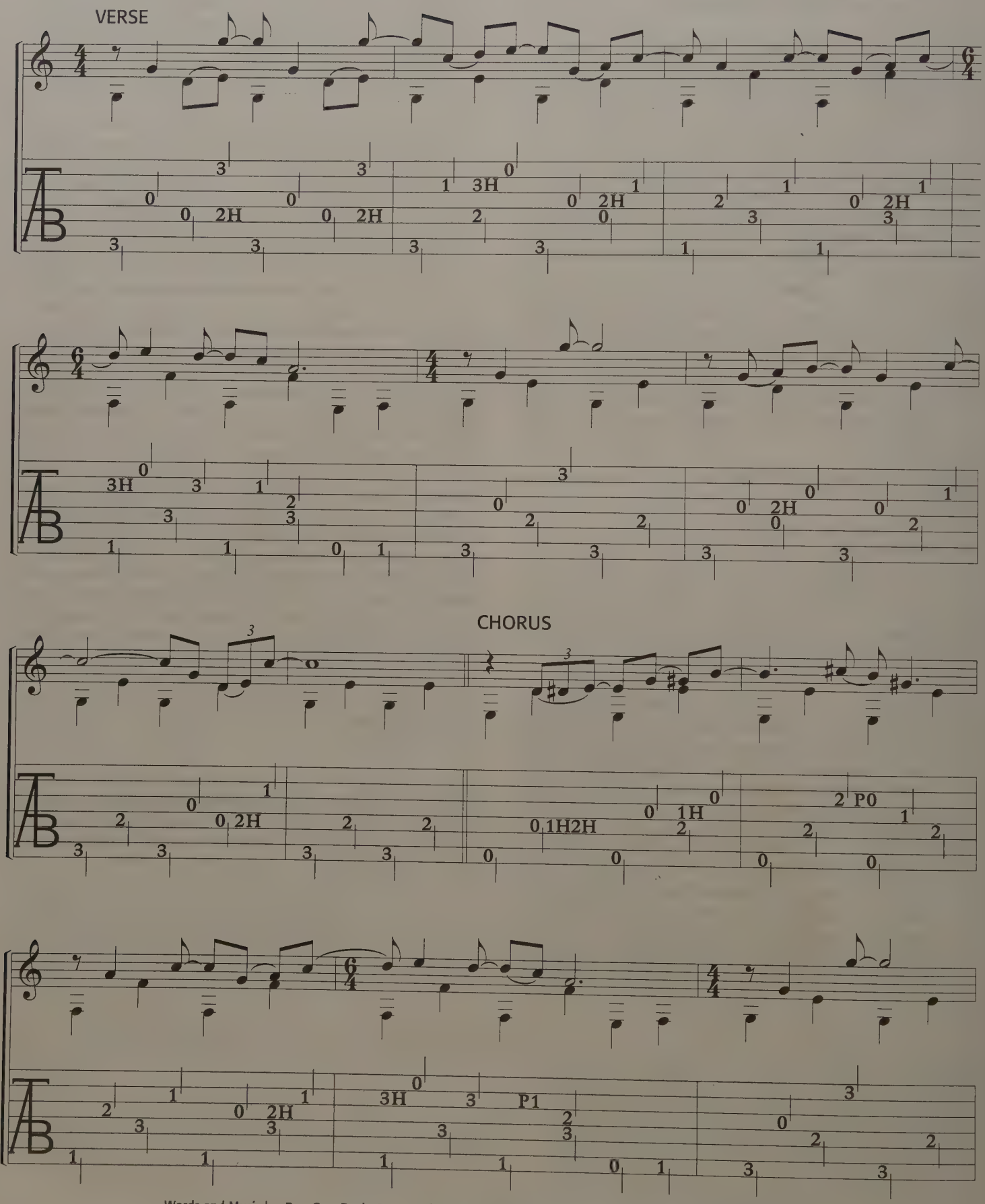
PICKING HAND POSITION FOR FINGERPICKING STYLES: The Classical and Flamenco schools have strict right-hand rules, however for this style of acoustic fingerpicking there are NO RULES, only suggestions. Your right hand position should be dictated by comfort, however in observation of many well-known fingerpickers I found one hand position similarity—they all tend to rest their little finger and/or ring finger on the face of the guitar. This seems to help their balance for accenting notes and control of the guitar. Experiment with this position: it may feel uncomfortable at first. I ask my students to perfect this position and then compare the sound to when their finger(s) were not placed on the face of the guitar. They usually find the sound is greatly improved when some contact is kept with the guitar face.

MUSIC NOTATION: We have somewhat adapted the music notation in that this also shows whether the note is picked with your thumb or index/middle fingers. The stems of the music notes correspond to the direction of the tab stems. I hope this will make the music notation clearer to fingerpicking guitarists.

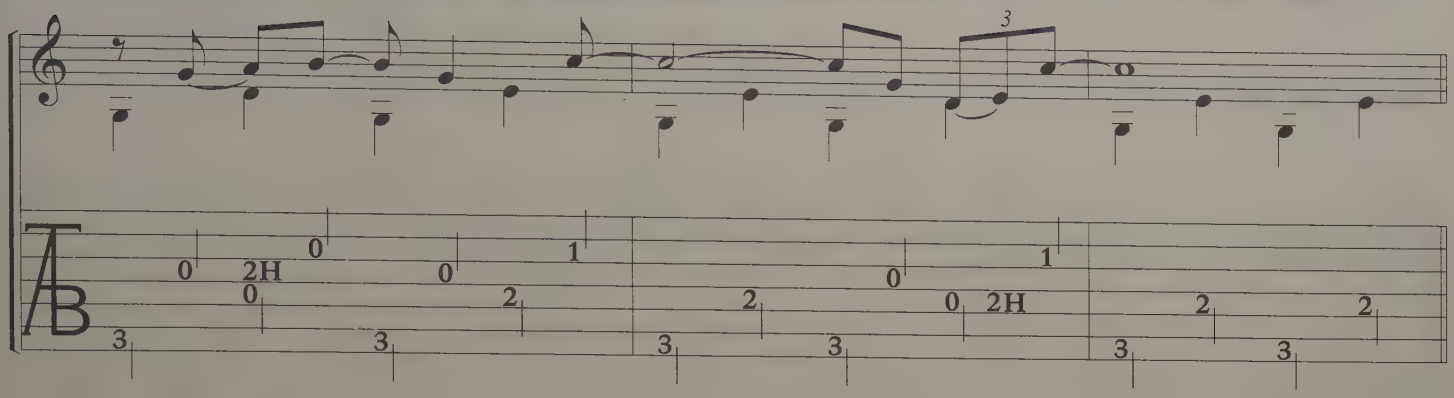
I hope you will feel at home and comfortable with the tablature and musical notations. Remember, these are only road maps indicating where and how you should place your fingers. The playing and musical interpretation is up to you.

Cocaine Blues

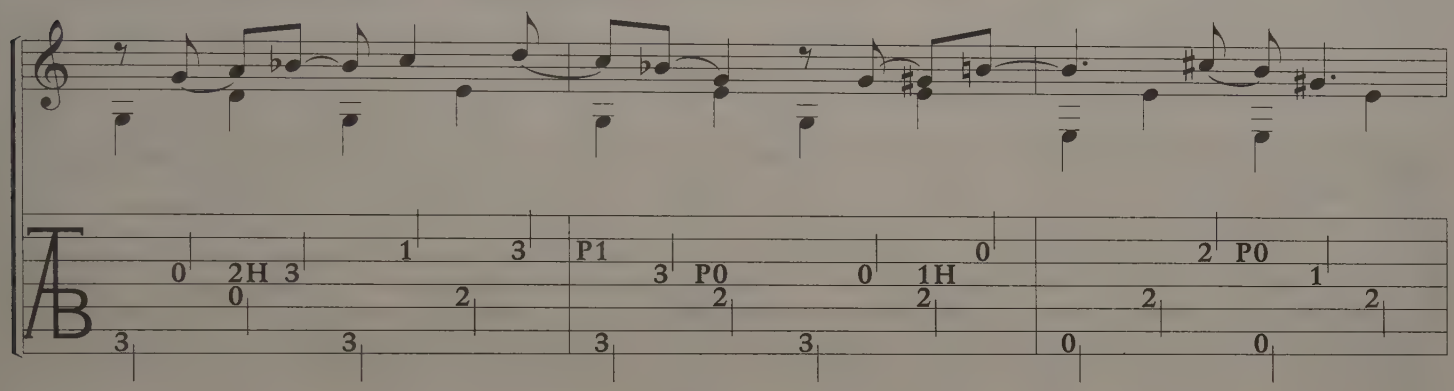
Standard Tuning

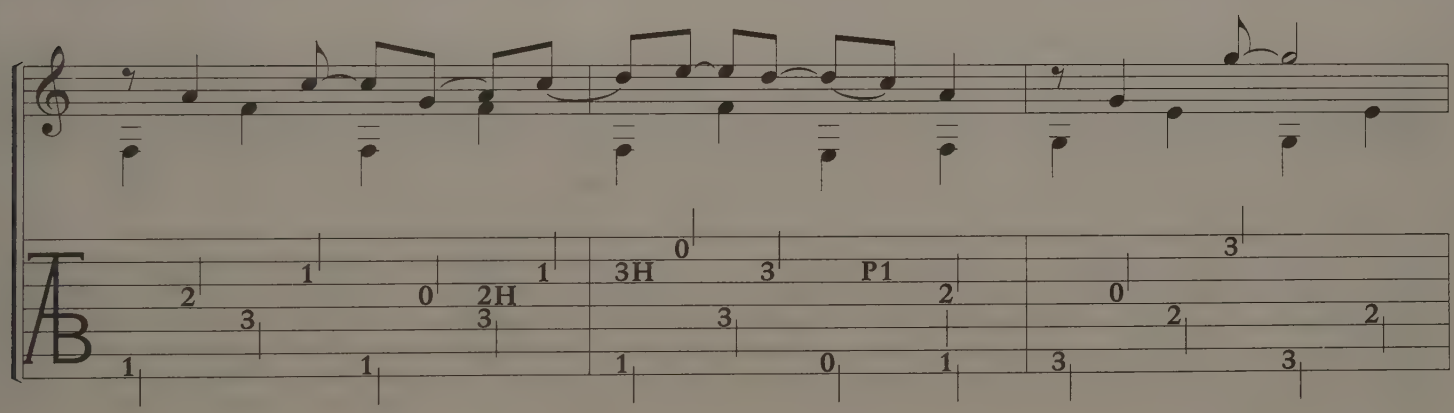


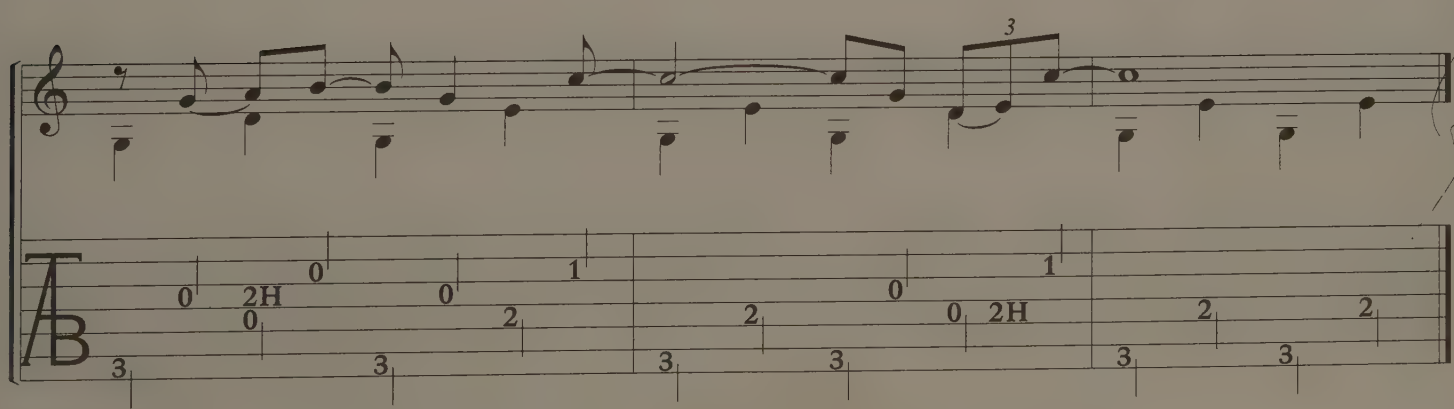
Words and Music by Rev. Gary Davis © 1977 Chandos Music (ASCAP) All Rights Reserved. Used With Permission



INSTRUMENTAL BREAK

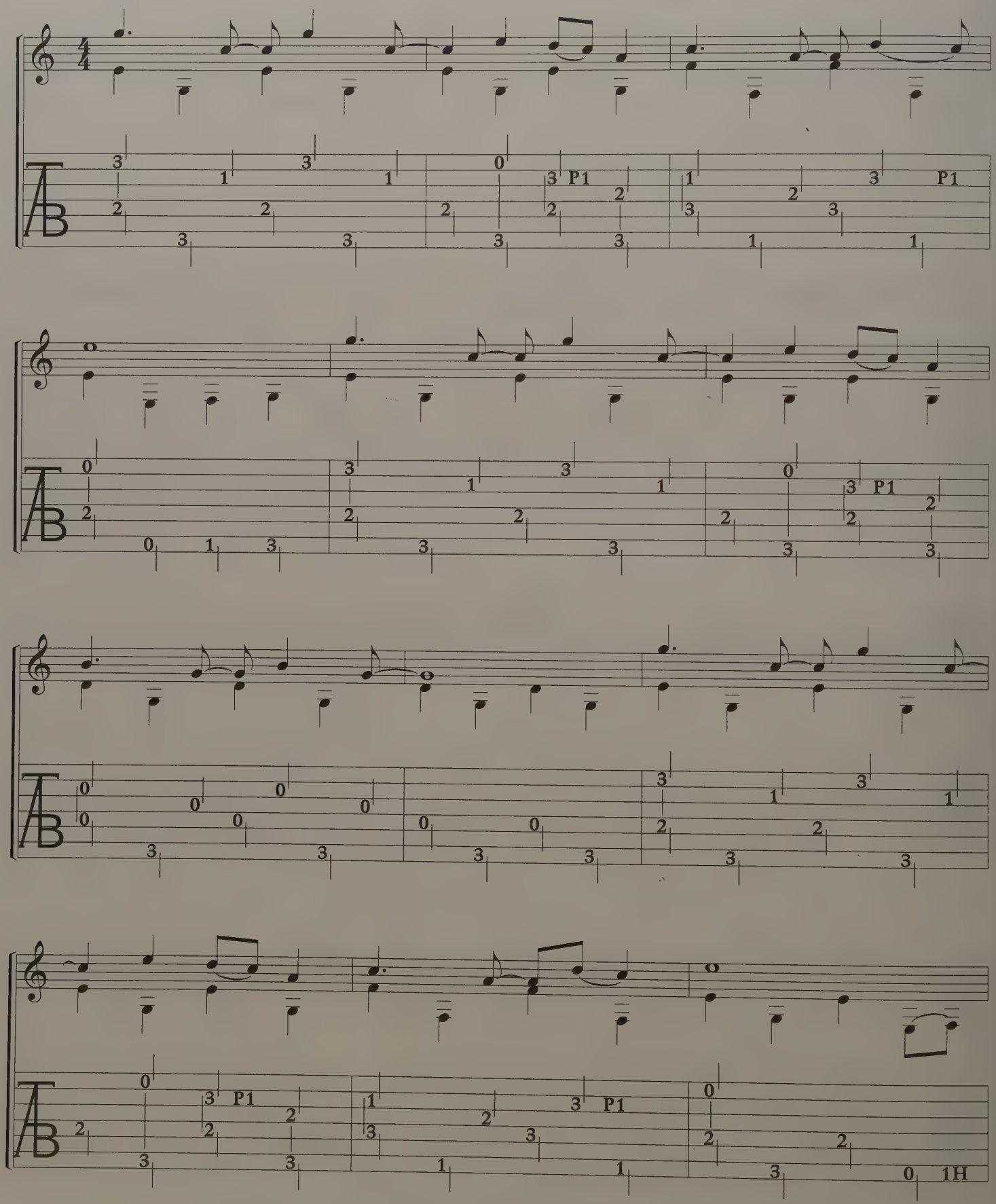






You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key

Standard Tuning



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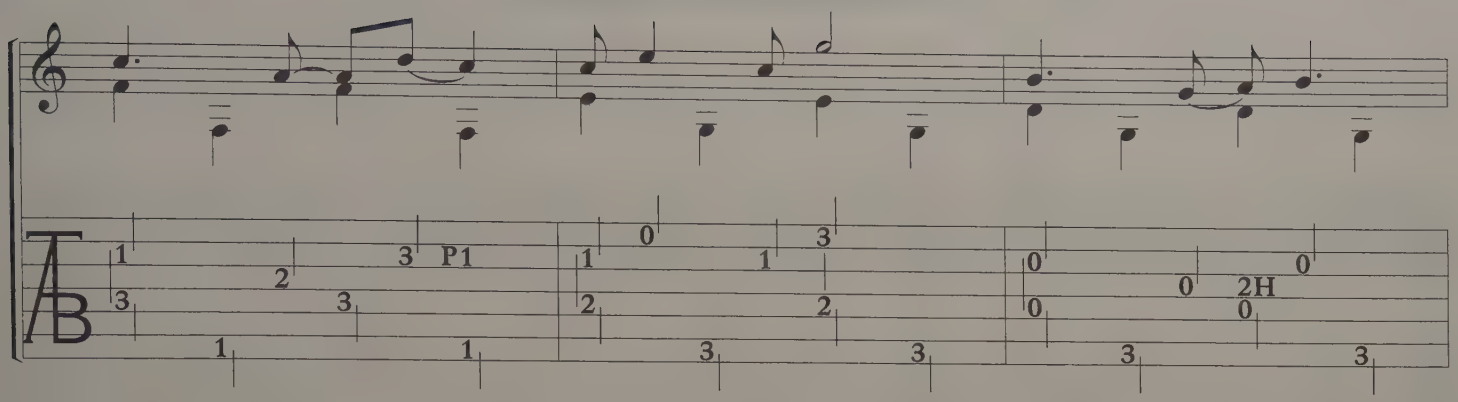
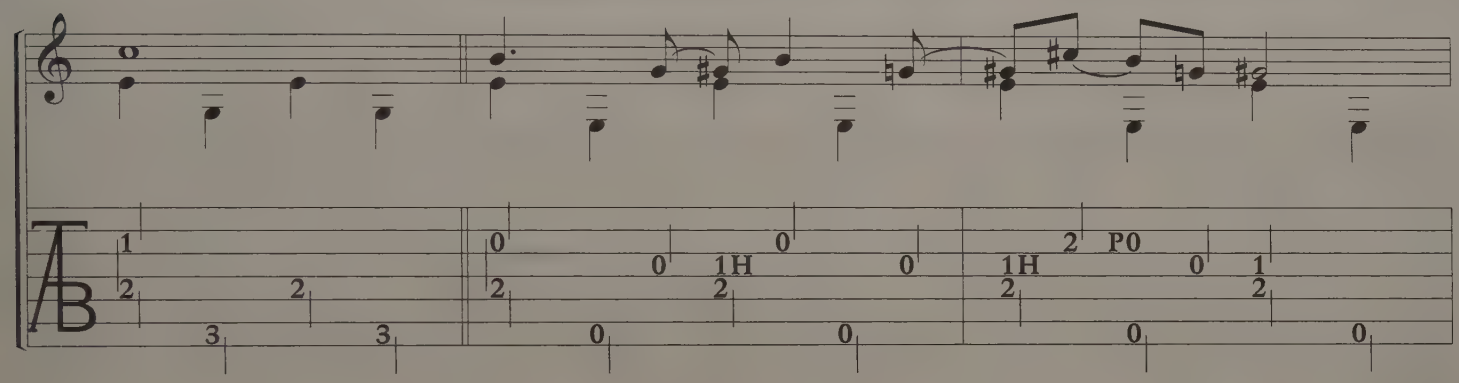
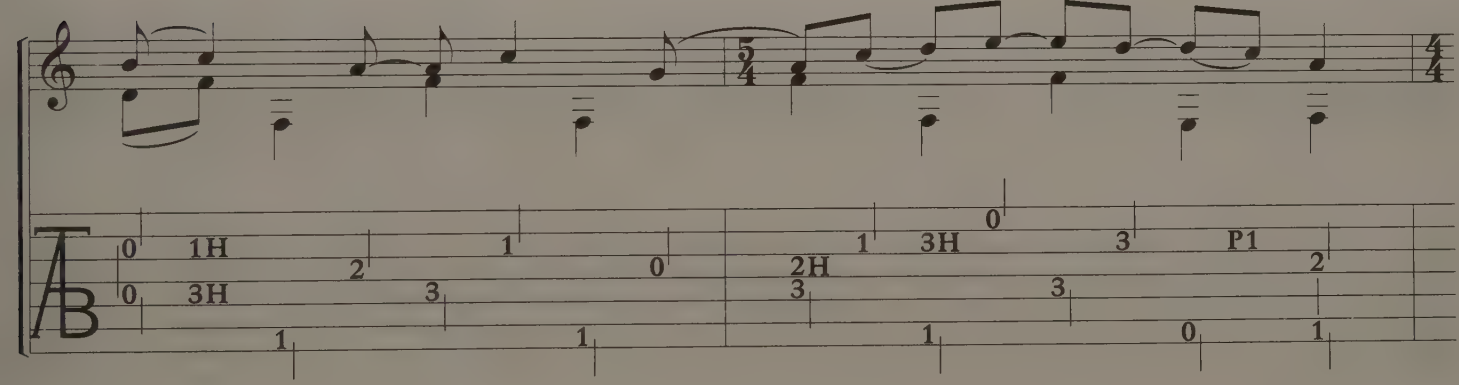
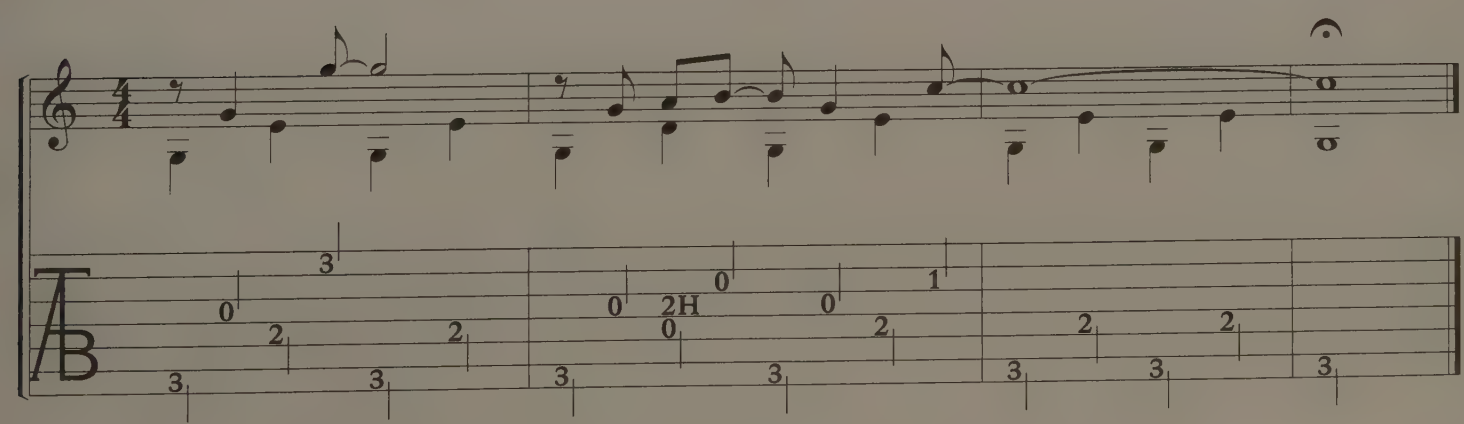


SECOND SECTION

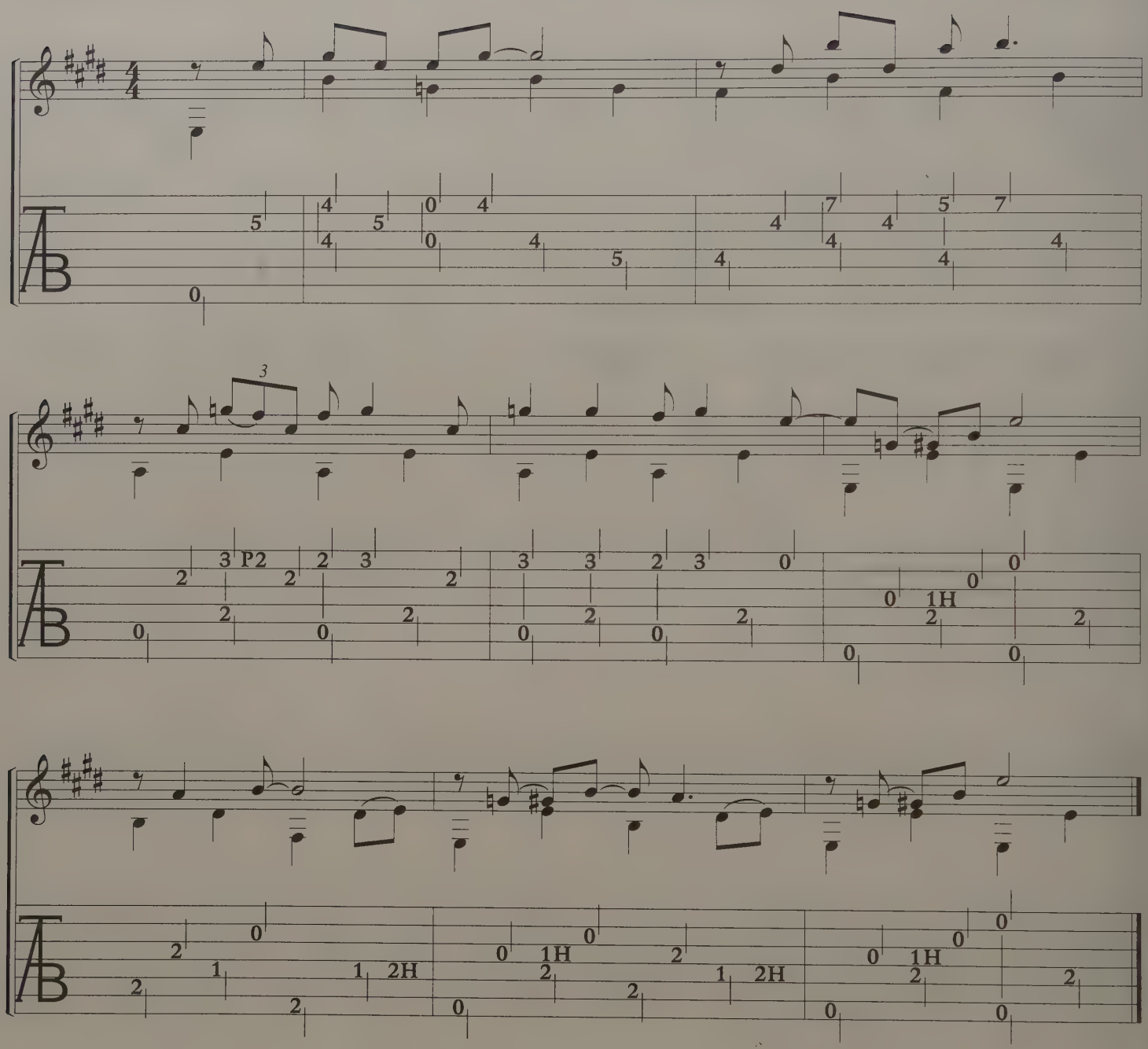






Crow Jane

Standard Tuning



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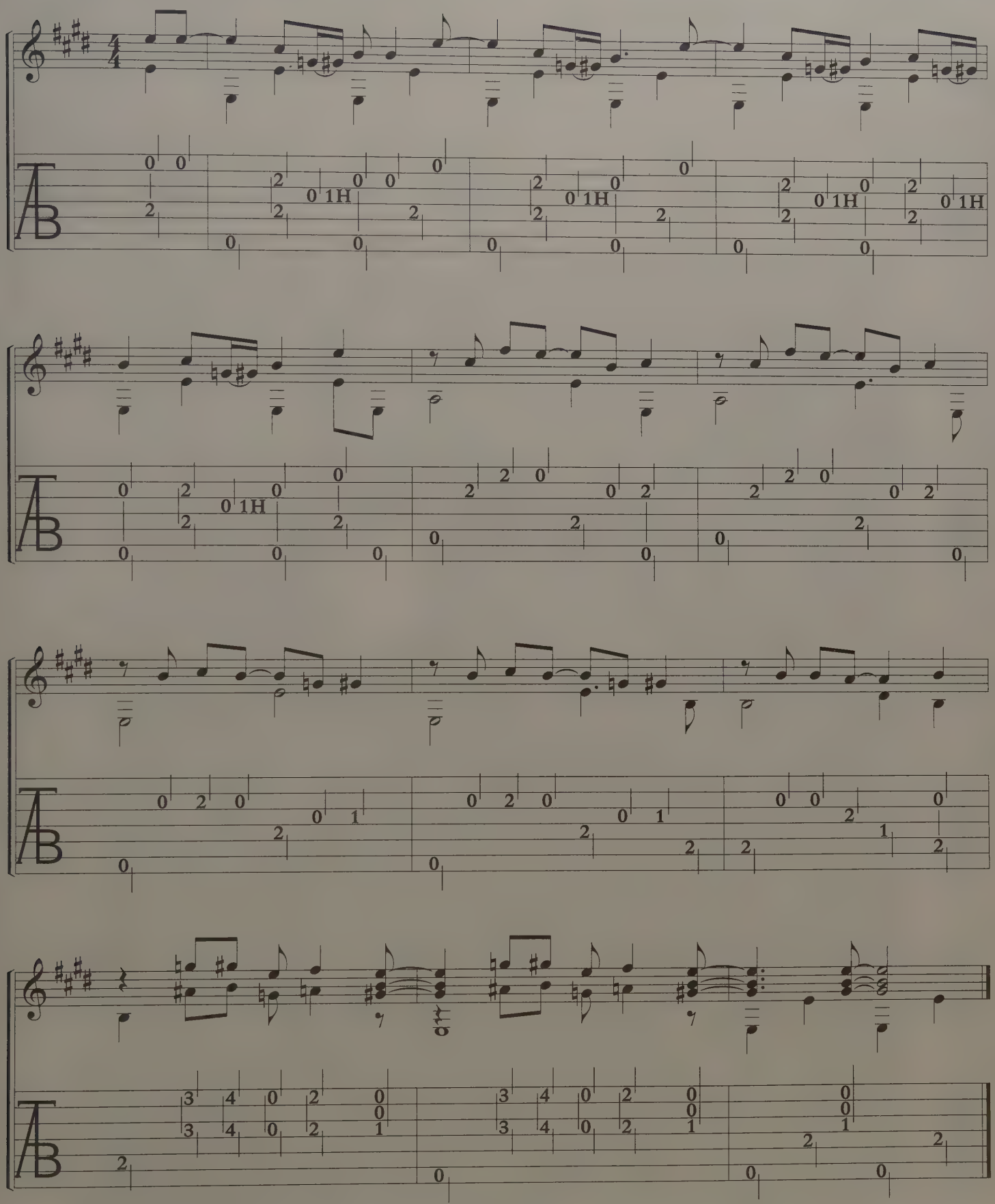
Keep It Clean

Standard Tuning



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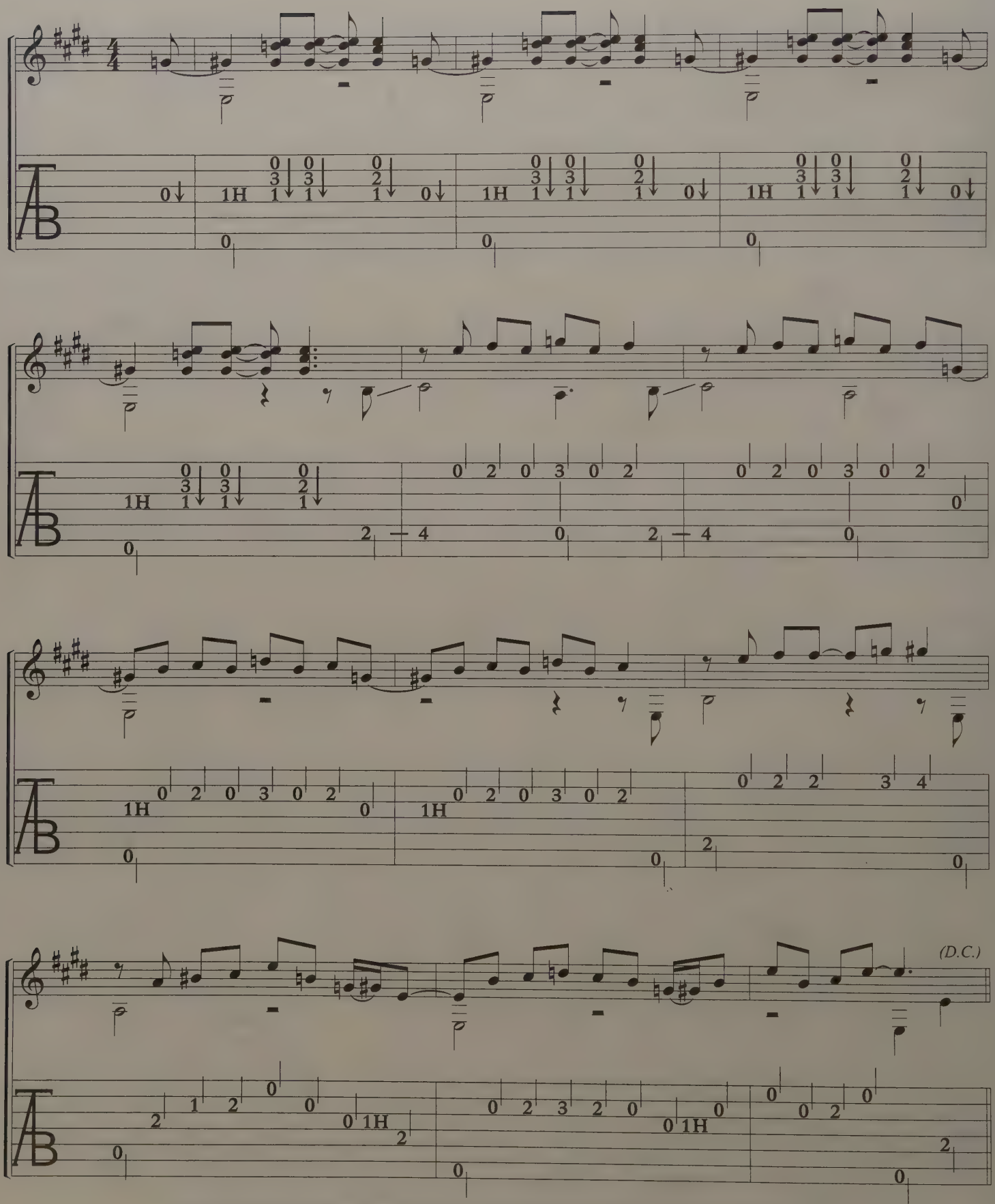
Hunkie Tunkie Blues

Standard Tuning



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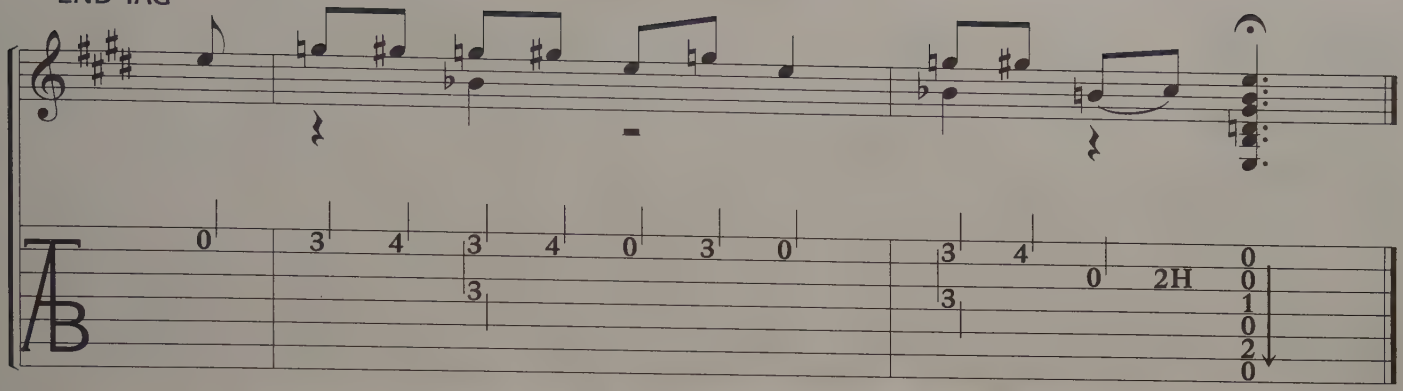
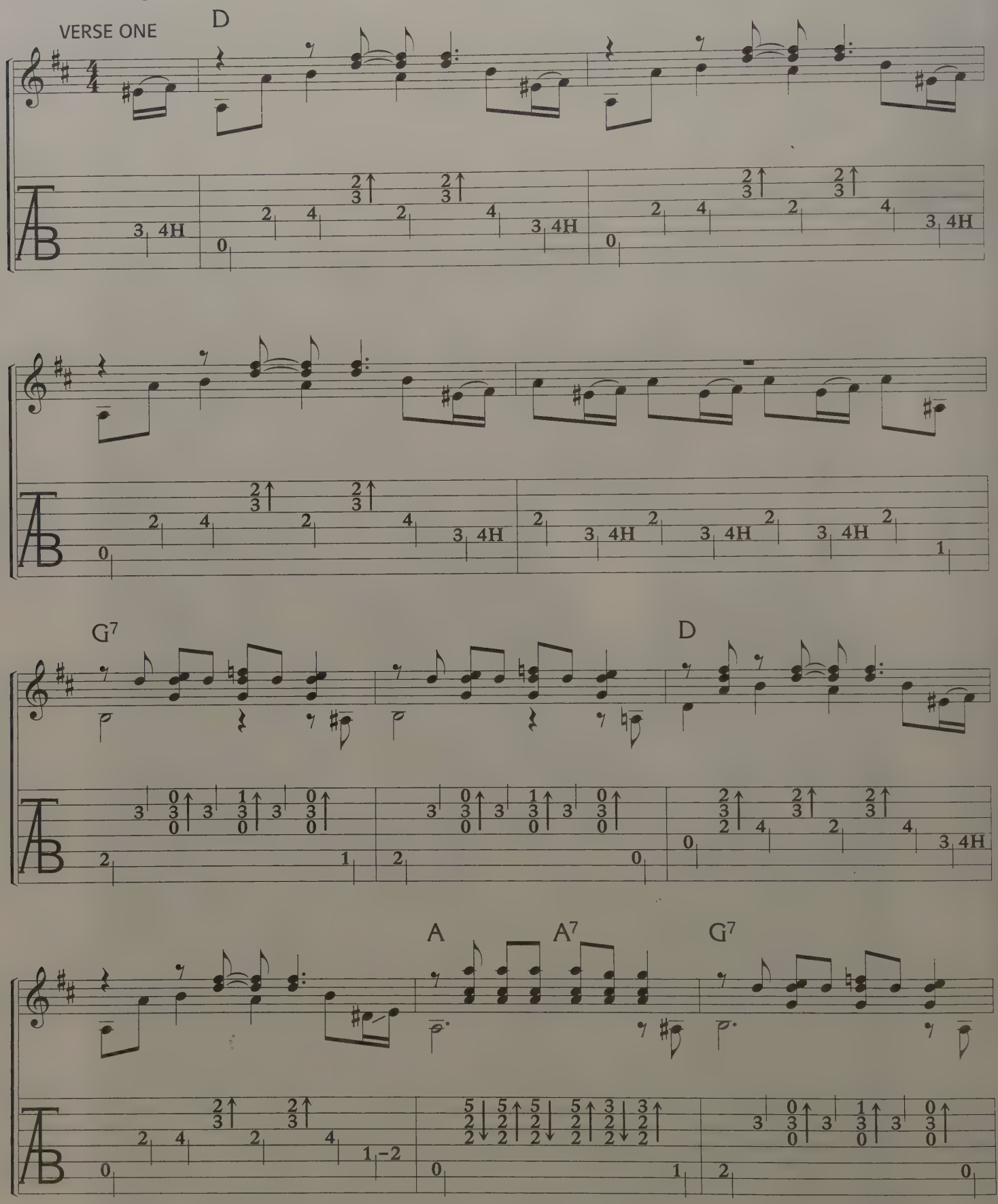
END TAG



Charley Jordan

Canned Heat

Standard Tuning



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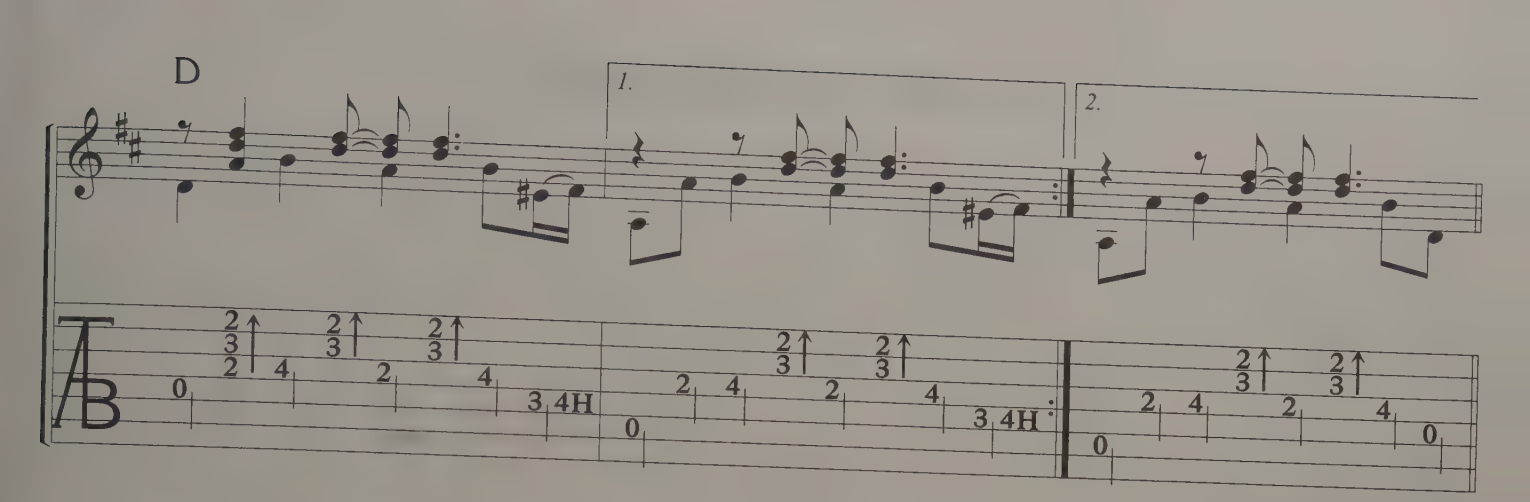
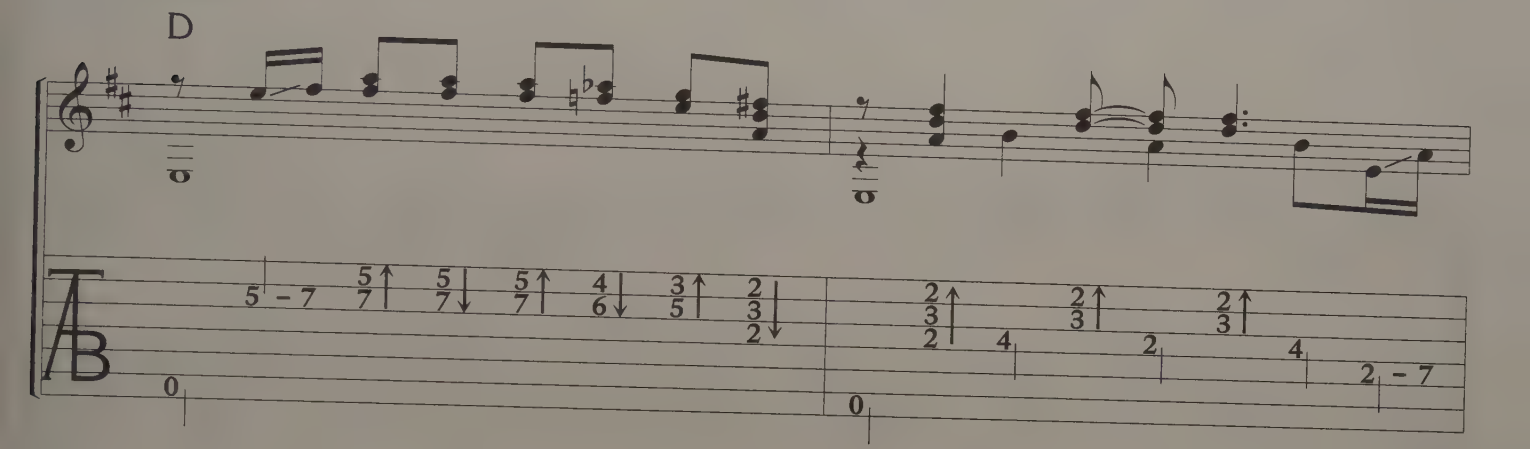
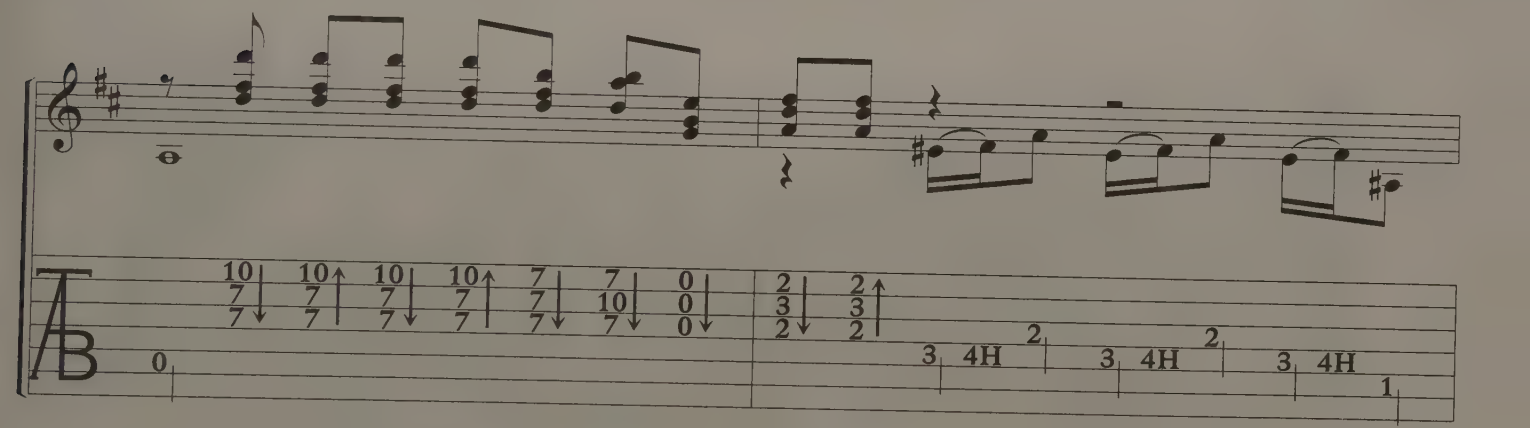
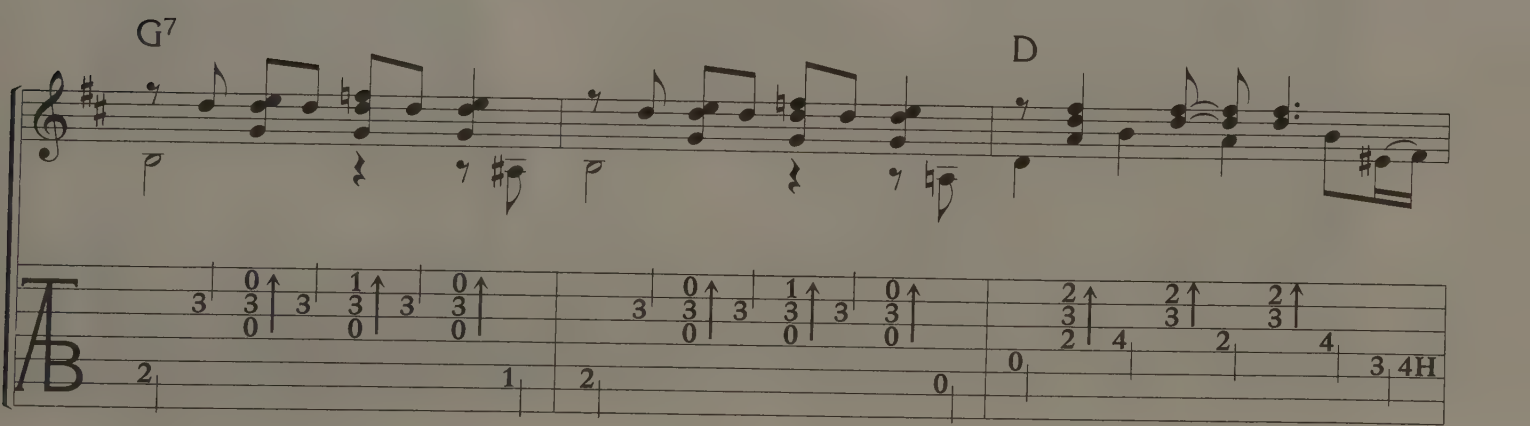
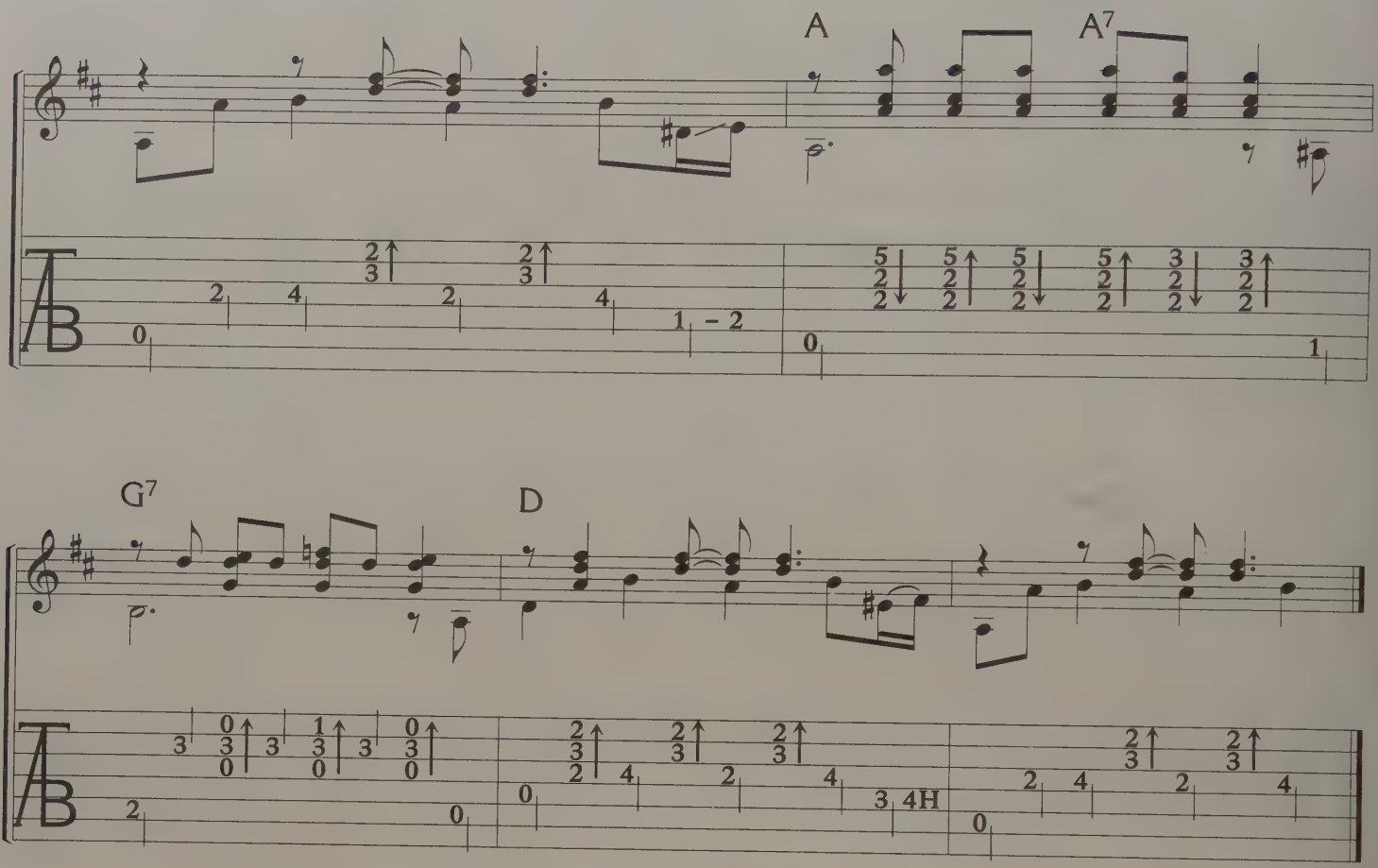


VERSE TWO







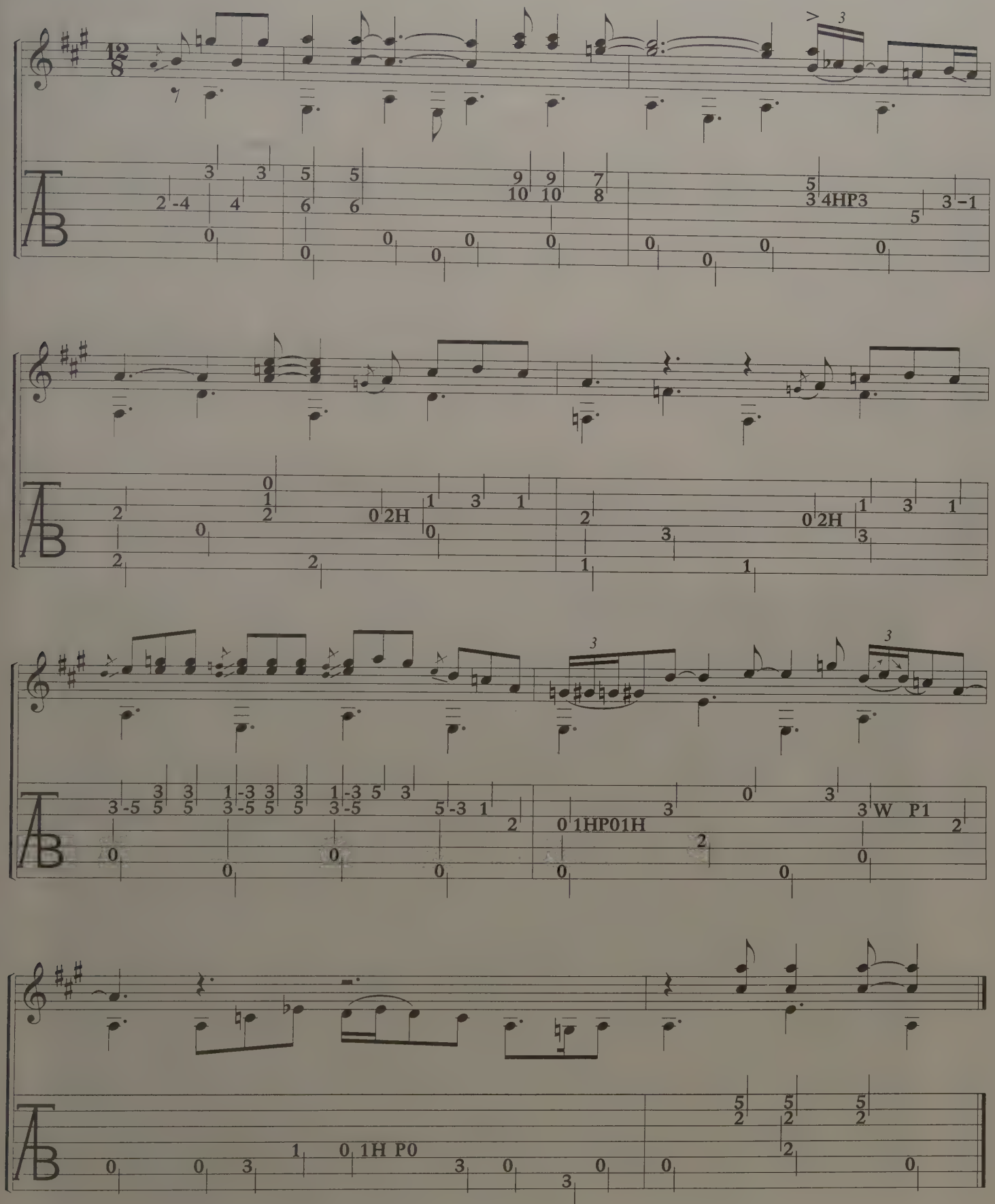


Rev. Gary Davis at the Cambridge Folk Festival, England

Photo by Stefan Grossman

Come Back Baby

Standard Tuning



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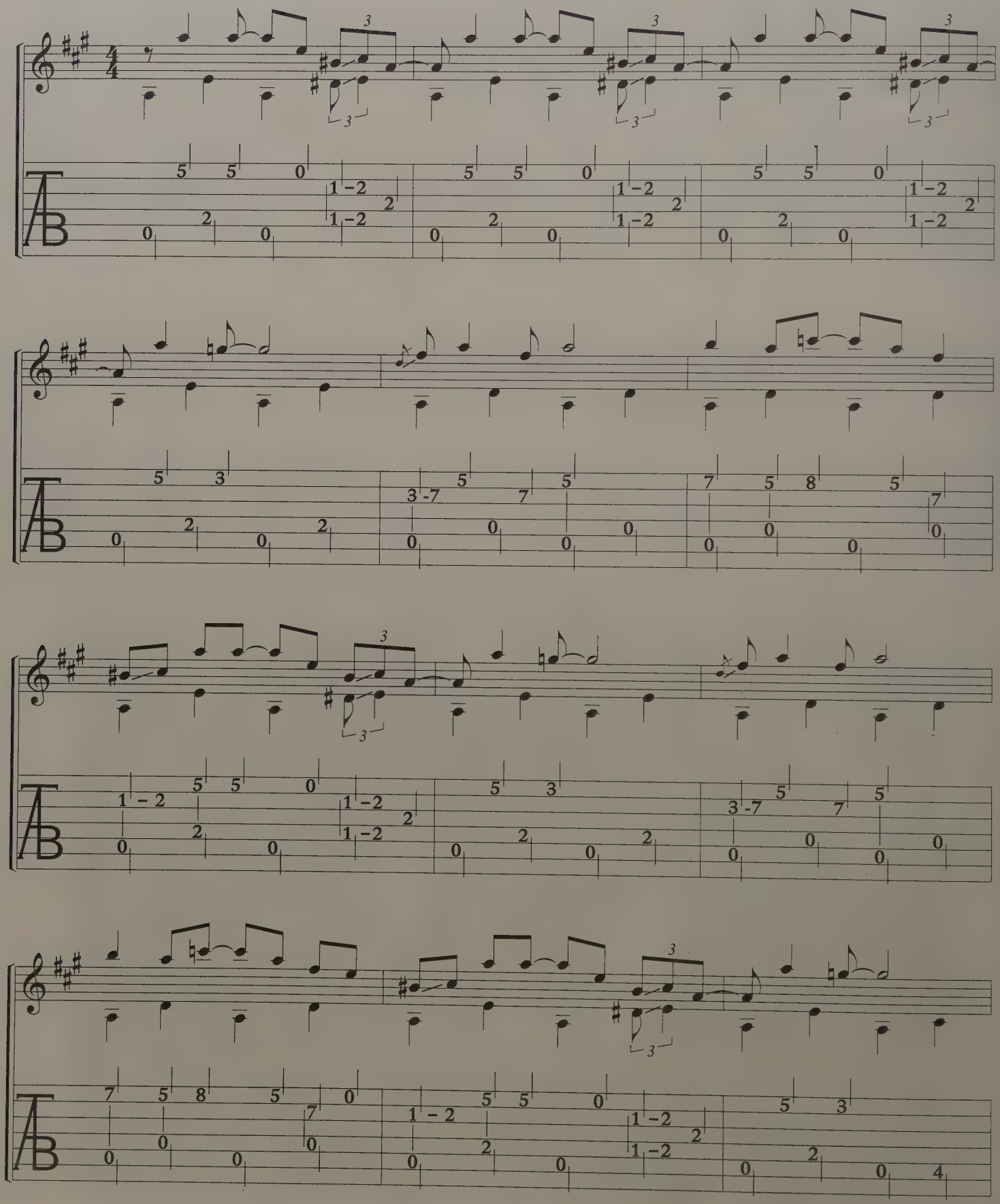
Monday Morning Blues

Standard Tuning



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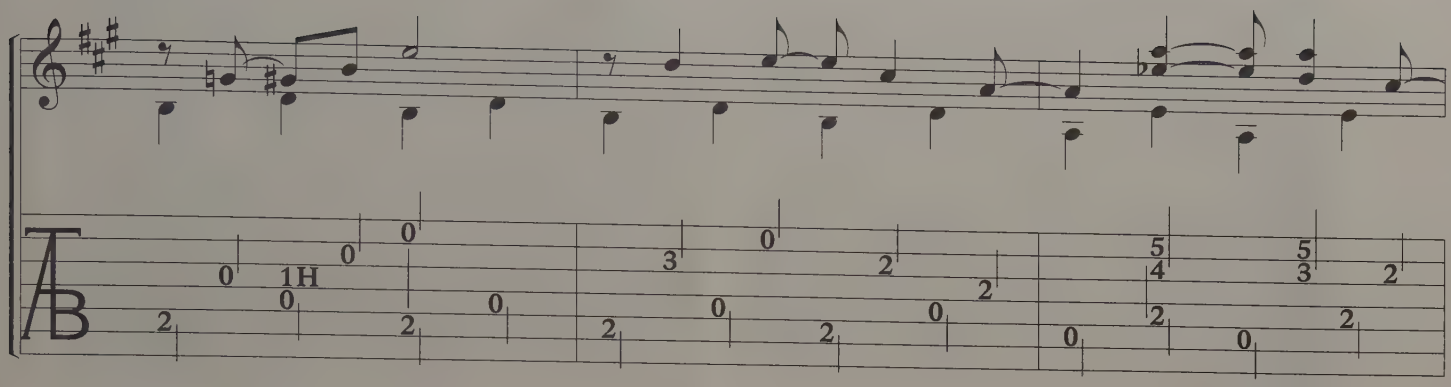
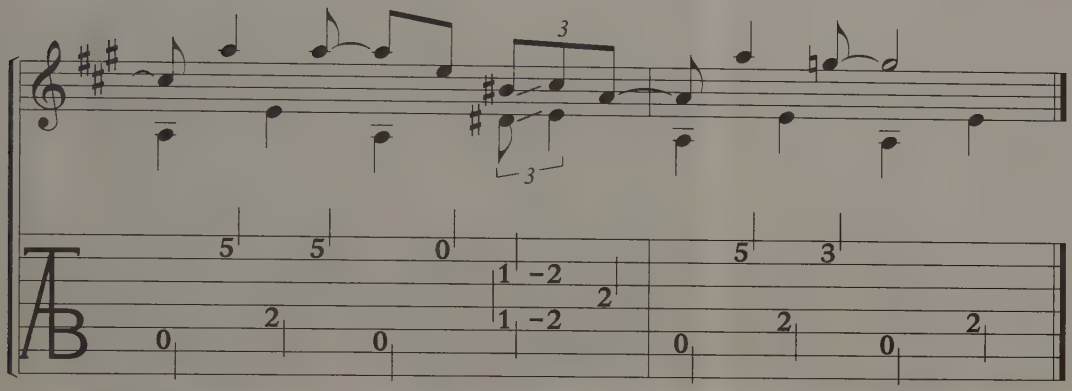
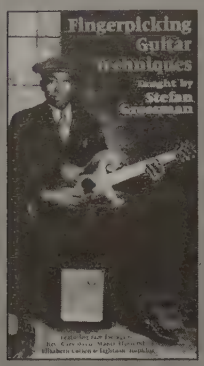




Skip James and Mississippi John Hurt at the Ontario Place, Washington, DC

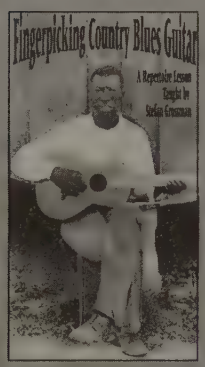
Video Lessons by Stefan Grossman



Fingerpicking Guitar Techniques
Taught by Stefan Grossman

78-min video • Level 1/2
24 page tab/music booklet
GW 901 $39.95

The basic concepts of finger-picking guitar and the alternating bass are explained and illustrated in this 78 minute video. *Shake That Thing, Death Come Creeping* and *Nobody's Dirty Business* are taught phrase by phrase, illustrating various fingerpicking techniques. A discussion of playing in different keys is included with examples in A, C, D, E, F and G with *Monday Morning Blues, Make Me A Pallet On Your Floor, Stagolee, Avalon Blues* and *Devil's Dream.* The monotonic bass is presented with the folkblues *Charley James.* Rare footage of Rev.Gary Davis, Mance Lipscomb, Elizabeth Cotten and Lightnin' Hopkins is featured.



Fingerpicking Country Blues Guitar
Taught by Stefan Grossman

67-min video • Level 1/2
40 page tab/music booklet
GW 931 $39.95

This video lesson has been designed to help beginner and intermediate students of fingerpicking blues guitar improve their playing skills and increase their repertoires using an alternating bass technique. It is the follow-up lesson to ***FINGERPICKING GUITAR TECHNIQUES*** video. Ten fingerstyle arrangements in the keys of C, D, E, A, G and F are presented. These popular blues and ragtime songs come from the playing of Mississippi John Hurt, Rev. Gary Davis, Mance Lipscomb and Elizabeth Cotten. You will be ready to tackle any of the other lessons presented in our catalog once you have mastered the arrangements in this video.

Titles include: My Creole Belle, Louis Collins, Oh Babe Ain't No Lie, All My Friends Are Gone, See See Rider, Sugarbabe, Monday Morning Blues, Candyman, Sister Kate and "F" Rag.

How To Play Blues Guitar
Taught by Stefan Grossman

107-min video • Level 3
56 page tab/music booklet
GW 903 $39.95

In this video a wide panorama of blues guitar styles and techniques are discussed and illustrated including the music of Blind Blake, Lightnin' Hop-kins, Mississippi John Hurt, Charlie Patton, Son House, Skip James, Tommy Johnson and Rev. Gary Davis. Featured is rare footage of Mance Lipscomb, Lightnin' Hopkins, Elizabeth Cotten, Son House and Rev. Gary Davis.

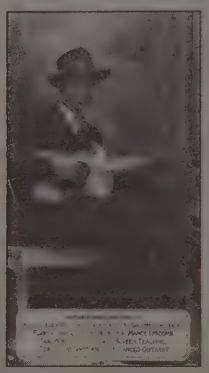
Titles include: Come Back Baby, I'm Satisfied, Cocaine Blues, Police Dog Blues, If You Don't Want Me, Turn Your Money Green, Frankie, Future Blues, Special Rider, Old Country Rock, Big Road Blues, Canned Heat, M&O Blues, Pony Blues and Mississippi Blues.

Country Blues Guitar Part One
Taught by Stefan Grossman

63-min video • Level 3
24 page tab/music booklet
GW 904 $39.95

Country Blues Guitar is a fascinating and challenging study. Our first lesson explores the Key of C. The alternating bass is discussed as well as the syncopated rhythms of Blind Blake. Examples from the playing of Rev. Gary Davis, Frank Stokes, Blind Blake, Blind Boy Fuller, Sam McGee and Elizabeth Cotten are explained and illustrated. Rare footage of Mississippi John Hurt, Rev. Gary Davis, Furry Lewis, Jesse Fuller and Elizabeth Cotten is featured.

Titles include: Freight Train, It Won't Be Long, Buck Dancer's Choice, Candyman, Salty Dog Blues, Ragtime Mama Blues and Blake's Rag.



Country Blues Guitar Part Two
Taught by Stefan Grossman

65-min video • Level 3
16 page tab/music booklet
GW 905 $39.95

In this second video lesson we explore playing in the Keys of G and A and how each can be used in folk, blues, and ragtime. Examples from the playing of Mississippi John Hurt, Willie Brown, Big Bill Broonzy, Robert Johnson, Mance Lipscomb, Lightnin' Hopkins and Rev. Gary Davis are explained and illustrated. Rare footage of Big Bill Broonzy, Rev. Gary Davis, Mance Lipscomb, Mississippi John Hurt, Furry Lewis and Lightnin' Hopkins is featured.

Titles include: Spike Driver's Blues, Shake Sugaree, Ragged And Dirty, Blues Licks In A, Willie Mae, Spoonful and Robert Johnson Blues Licks in A.

Country Blues Guitar Part Three
Taught by Stefan Grossman

68-min video • Level 3
16page tab/music booklet
GW 906 $39.95

In this third video lesson we explore playing in the keys of D and E and blues guitar styles from the country to the city. Texas blues and the monotonic bass are illustrated. The alternating bass style is further explored. An in-depth study of the blues vibrato is explained. Examples are used from the playing of Mississippi John Hurt, Mance Lipscomb, Lightnin' Hopkins, Lonnie Johnson and Frank Stokes. Rare footage of Big Bill Broonzy, Rev. Gary Davis, Son House and Sonny Terry and Brownie McGhee is featured.

Titles include: Lightnin' Hopkins Blues Licks In E, Stagolee, Take A Whiff On Me, Tribute To Lonnie Johnson, Charley James and Avalon Blues.

"I first met Stefan Grossman in the States years ago and we became extremely good friends. Personally, I have learned a great deal from him. Let's face it, he needs very little introduction from me as a blues artist, discographer and connoisseur in blues." – Eric Clapton

"Grossman in particular, has been responsible almost single-handedly for maintaining and enriching the tradition of folk-guitar playing. He has made himself master of countless traditional blues, folk and ragtime styles." – Music Week

Advanced Fingerpicking Guitar Techniques Blues Guitar

Taught by Stefan Grossman

* *

74-min video • Level 3
32 page tab/music booklet
GW 928 $39.95

* *

Four multi-sectioned blues instrumentals are presented based on traditional techniques, blues piano ideas, single string melodic guitar licks and horn styled solos. The music varies from a piano-styled boogie to a slow country blues to a New Orleans blues in the style of Ray Charles and Snooks Eaglin.

Titles include: Slow Blues In C, Lemon's Jump, Yazoo Basin Boogie and Heart Much Obliged.

Ragtime Blues Guitar

Taught by Stefan Grossman

* *

74-min video • Level 3
48 page tab/music booklet
GW 929 $39.95

* *

The guitar styles and techniques of Blind Blake, Big Bill Broonzy and Rev. Gary Davis combine blues and ragtime techniques into a style described as "raggin' the blues."

Titles include: Diddie Wa Diddie, Shuffle Rag, Glory Of Love, Buck Dance, Cincinnati Flow Rag, Hot Dogs and Twelve Sticks.

Hot Fiddle Tunes & Rags

Taught by Stefan Grossman

* *

79-min video • Level 3
32 page tab/music booklet
GW 930 $39.95

* *

The study of fiddle tunes and rags offers the fingerstyle guitarist an array of styles and techniques. Five hot instrumentals are presented in this lesson that combine alternating bass techniques, counterpoint lines, single string runs, complex chord fingerings and rhythmic licks.

Titles include: Colored Aristocracy, Boys My Money's All Gone, Dallas Rag, Katz Rag and Black Mountain Rag.

Bottleneck Blues Guitar

Taught by Stefan Grossman

* *

82-min video • Level 2/3
48 page tab/music booklet
GW 902 $39.95

* *

"Rare '60s footage of country blues greats enhances this important video. Stefan begins by letting his co-stars trace the evolution of slide techniques: Bukka White plays a lap-style 'Poor Boy' with a skinny steel rod, Mance Lipscomb thumps a jackknife version of 'Jack Of Diamonds,' and Fred McDowell bottlenecks an electrified 'John Henry.' Son House slaps a harrowing, loose-hand 'Death Letter Blues' on his National and then Bukka concludes with an amazing percussive 'Aberdeen Mississippi.' Given the magnificence of these B&W clips, the opening 22 minutes justify the $39.95 tag. But that's just the start. A fine country blues player and savvy instructor, Grossman digs deep into old-time techniques. He details slide materials, picks vs. fingers, and the best acoustic guitars." – Guitar Player Magazine

This 82 minute video is a **MUST** for anyone interested in bottleneck blues guitar. It is a complete survey of country blues bottleneck styles and techniques featuring rare footage of Son House, Fred McDowell, Mance Lipscomb and Bukka White. Left-hand playing techniques are discussed as well as choice of bottleneck/slide. Playing in Open G (Spanish) and Open D (Vestapol) tunings are explored.

Titles include: Banty Rooster, One Kind Favor, Someday Baby Blues, Roll And Tumble Blues, Can't Be Satisfied, You Got To Move, Wake Up Mama, God Moves On The Water, Good Morning Little Schoolgirl and Whistlin' Blues.

Hot Fingerpicking Guitar Solos

Taught by Stefan Grossman

* *

58-min video • Level 3/4
16 page tab/music booklet
GW 912 $39.95

* *

Bermuda Triangle Exit and *Blues For The Mann* are presented in this lesson. Both tunes have various sections that will help the intermediate/advanced student explore the many facets of fingerstyle guitar.

Bermuda Triangle Exit combines a counterpoint bass figure with an alternating bass technique combined with complex chord movements. *Blues For The Mann* is a complex fingerstyle blues in A. The first section is reminiscent of piano blues from New Orleans. This is contrasted with the second section which is played in a Delta tradition with the addition of some hot licks.

More Hot Fingerpicking Guitar Solos

Taught by Stefan Grossman

* *

79-min video • Level 3/4
32 page tab/music booklet
GW 913 $39.95

* *

This video lesson presents two extended guitar instrumentals: *Struttin' Rag* has two distinct parts. It runs the gamut from lowdown blues to complex ragtime.

Tightrope introduces a rhythmic jazz sound that attempts to capture the texture of a jazz combo - from bass to drums to lead guitar. Unusual right and left hand techniques are explored.

CD Track Listings

The audio lessons in this series were originally recorded in the 1970s. They were initially released on audio cassettes. We have gone back to our master tapes to get the best possible sound for this new CD edition. The complete contents of the original recordings have been maintained but certain references to albums that are no longer available or information that is out of date have been edited out .

These lessons originally came with different print material. These were handwritten and in some cases offered only tab transcriptions. The lessons have now been typeset in tab/music. As a result some spoken references on the CDs regarding page numbers or a position of a line or phrase on a page may differ slightly from the written tab/music in this new edition. We have annotated as carefully and exactly as possible what each track on the CDs present. Please use these track descriptions as your reference guide.

Lesson One

Track 1: Tuning
Track 2: Introduction to *Cocaine Blues*
Track 3: Performance of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 4: Talk on techniques used in *Cocaine Blues*
Track 5: Teaching of first bar of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 6: Plays slowly first bar of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 7: Teaching of second bar of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 8: Teaching of third and fourth bars of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 9: Plays slowly first six bars of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 10: Teaching of sixth bar of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 11: Plays slowly complete verse of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 12: Teaching of chorus section of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 13: Teaching of instrumental section of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 14: Plays complete arrangement slowly of *Cocaine Blues*
Track 15: Introduction of Rev. Gary Davis performing *Cocaine Blues*
Track 16: Rev. Gary Davis performing *Cocaine Blues*
Track 17: Introduction to *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 18: Performance of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 19: Teaching of first three bars of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 20: Plays slowly first three bars of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 21: Teaching of fourth to eighth bars of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 22: Plays slowly first eight bars of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 23: Plays slowly first twelve bars of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 24: Teaching of end of twelfth bar to end of verse of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 25: Plays slowly complete verse of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 26: Teaching of second section (variation) of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 27: Plays slowly second section (variation) and verse of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 28: Plays up to tempo complete arrangement of *You Got The Pocketbook, I Got The Key*
Track 29: Introduction to *Crow Jane*
Track 30: Performance of *Crow Jane*
Track 31: Teaching of first four bars of *Crow Jane*
Track 32: Plays slowly first four bars of *Crow Jane*
Track 33: Teaching of fifth bar to end of arrangement of *Crow Jane*
Track 34: Plays slowly from fifth bar to end of *Crow Jane*
Track 35: Plays slowly complete arrangement of *Crow Jane*
Track 36: Plays up to tempo *complete arrangement Crow Jane*
Track 37: Teaching of variations for *Crow Jane*
Track 38: Introduction of other recordings using same progression of *Crow Jane*
Track 39: Mississippi John Hurt performs *Sliding Delta*
Track 40: Furry Lewis perform *Dry Land Blues*
Track 41: Big Bill Broonzy performs *Keys To The Highway*
Track 42: Mance Lipscomb performs *Keys To The Highway*

Lesson Two

Track 1: Charley Jordan performing *Keep It Clean*
Track 2: Introduction to lesson
Track 3: Tuning
Track 4: Teaching of first four bars of *Keep It Clean*
Track 5: Plays slowly first four bars of *Keep It Clean*
Track 6: Teaching of fifth and sixth bars of *Keep It Clean*
Track 7: Plays slowly first six bars of *Keep It Clean*
Track 8: Talk on dampening the bass strings
Track 9: Plays first six bars of *Keep It Clean* with dampening effect
Track 10: Teaching of seventh bar to end of *Keep It Clean*
Track 11: Plays slowly from seventh bar to end of *Keep It Clean*
Track 12: Plays up to tempo *complete arrangement of Keep It Clean*
Track 13: Closing thoughts on *Keep It Clean*
Track 14: Charley Jordan performing *Keep It Clean #2*
Track 15: Introduction to *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 16: Charley Jordan performing *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 17: Discussion on strumming
Track 18: Teaching of first four bars of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 19: Plays slowly first four bars of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 20: Teaching of fifth and sixth bars of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 21: Plays slowly first six bars of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 22: Teaching of seventh bar to end of arrangement of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 23: Plays slowly arrangement of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 24: Teaching of end tag of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 25: Plays slowly complete arrangement of *Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 26: *Closing thoughts on Hunkie Tunkie Blues*
Track 27: Tommy Johnson performing *Canned Heat*
Track 28: Stefan and Rory Blues perform duet arrangement of *Canned Heat*
Track 29: Introduction to *Canned Heat*
Track 30: Tuning
Track 31: Teaching of first bar of verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 32: Plays slowly first bar of *Canned Heat* and continues to second and third bars
Track 33: Teaching of fourth bar of *Canned Heat*
Track 34: Plays slowly first four bars of *Canned Heat*
Track 35: Teaching of fifth and sixth bars of *Canned Heat*
Track 36: Plays slowly first six bars of verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 37: Teaching of seventh bar to end of verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 38: Plays slowly first verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 39: Teaching of variation in second verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 40: Plays slowly first four bars of second verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 41: Plays slowly and then up to tempo second verse of *Canned Heat*
Track 42: Talk about Tommy Johnson's *Big Road Blues*
Track 43: Performing of *Yazoo Basin Boogie*
Track 44: Tommy Johnson performing of *Big Road Blues*
Track 45: *Willie Lofton performing of Big Road Blues*

Lesson Three

Track 1: Stefan and Jo Ann Kelly performing *Come Back Baby*
Track 2: Introduction to *Come Back Baby*
Track 3: Tuning
Track 4: Plays complete arrangement solo of *Come Back Baby*
Track 5: Teaching of first two bars of *Come Back Baby*
Track 6: Plays slowly first two bars of *Come Back Baby*
Track 7: Teaching of third and fourth bars of *Come Back Baby*
Track 8: Plays slowly third and fourth bars of *Come Back Baby*
Track 9: Teaching of fifth bar of *Come Back Baby*
Track 10: Plays slowly fifth bar of *Come Back Baby*
Track 11: Teaching of opening notes of sixth bar of *Come Back Baby*
Track 12: Plays slowly fifth and opening notes of sixth bars of *Come Back Baby*
Track 13: Teaching of end of sixth bar of *Come Back Baby*
Track 14: Plays slowly complete sixth bar of *Come Back Baby*
Track 15: Teaching of bass lick in seventh bar of *Come Back Baby*
Track 16: Plays complete arrangement slowly of *Come Back Baby*
Track 17: Discussion of vibrato effect
Track 18: Snooks Eaglin performing *Come Back Baby*
Track 19: Lightnin' Hopkins performing *Penitentiary Blues*
Track 20: Introduction to *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 21: Mississippi John Hurt performing *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 22: Teaching of first four bars of *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 23: Plays slowly first four bars of *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 24: Teaching of fifth and sixth bars of *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 25: Plays slowly first six bars of *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 26: *Teaching of seventh to twelfth bars of Monday Morning Blues*
Track 27: Plays slowly *seventh to twelfth bars of Monday Morning Blues*
Track 28: Teaching of thirteen bar to end of *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 29: Plays slowly complete arrangement of *Monday Morning Blues*
Track 30: Plays up to tempo complete arrangement of *Monday Morning Blues*

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